THE COMMONWEAL

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

Volume XV | New York, Wednesday, December 9, 1931 | Number 6

EDITORIAL BOARD

MICHAEL WILLIAMS, Editor
GEORGE N. SHUSTER, Managing Editor
MARY KOLARS, Assistant Editor
FREDERIC THOMPSON, Assistant Editor

JOHN F. MCCORMICK, Business Manager

EDITORIAL COUNCIL

CARLTON J. H. HAYES
T. LAWRASON RIGGS
RICHARD DANA SKINNER
JAMES J. WALSH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Catholic Leakage 141
Week by Week 143
The Old-fashioned City 145
Mexico under Observation ..... James A. Magner 147
Our Orderly Novelists ..... Francis X. Connolly 149
America Wet ..... Frederic Damrau 152
The Pheasant (*verse*) ..... Robert P. Tristram Coffin 154
Ephesus ..... Joseph M. Egan 154
Out (*verse*) ..... Dorothy Leonard 155
A Century of Poe ..... Edward J. Breen 156
The Little Singers ..... Vincent C. Donovan 156
Communications 157
The Play ..... Richard Dana Skinner 160
Books ..... Patrick J. Healy, Edward A. Fitzpatrick, John Gilland Brunini, Frederic Thompson, Henry Morton Robinson, Michael Earls, Paul Crowley 162

Previous issues of THE COMMONWEAL are indexed in the *Readers' Guide* and the *Catholic Periodical Index*.
Published weekly and copyrighted 1931, in the United States by the Calvert Publishing Corporation, Grand Central Terminal, New York, N. Y. United States: $5.00; Foreign: $6.00; Canada: $5.50. Single Copies: $.10.

CATHOLIC LEAKAGE

WHAT we recently said about the decline and probable rapid decrease in the Catholic population of the United States under existing conditions, particularly our excessive urbanization and the stoppage of Catholic immigration, has been more than confirmed—indeed, it has been underlined and emphasized in a fashion for which the word sensational is not too strong, particularly when we consider the source of the confirmation: the highly responsible *Ecclesiastical Review,* which has peremptorily challenged the attention of all thoughtful American Catholics with an essay in its December number by the Reverend John A. O'Brien, Ph.D., to which is appended a criticism by Dr. Frank O'Hara, and a rejoinder to Dr. O'Hara's remarks by the Reverend J. Elliot Ross.

For the startling title of Dr. O'Brien's essay is: "Did We Lose Half a Million Catholics Last Year?" He not only asks such a question: he answers it affirmatively. Dr. Frank O'Hara, a student of statistics and one of the most practical and experienced lay leaders of Catholic Action, while questioning the complete validity of the statistical method by which Dr. O'Brien reached his conclusions, can, however, only go so far in rebuttal as to say that "perhaps the facts are not so serious as the figures seem to show, but in any case they are bad enough"; while Father Ross, in his rejoinder to Dr. O'Hara, states that even if the latter's method of correcting the figures given by Dr. O'Brien should be accepted, "this would still leave *a loss of four hundred thousand born Catholics last year.*"

During that year, the number of converts reported was 39,528. This was a gain of 1,296 over the figure reported for the previous year. The gain had been hailed with rejoicing. But while indeed we should rejoice over even one soul brought within the House of Life, what are we to say about that vast multitude of souls, numbering nearly half a million (according to the most favorable of the three opinions given by these expert students of our vital statistics), who have left the fold?

Of course these opinions will be strongly controverted. Possibly they will be shown to be wrong; probably on the ground of the incomplete figures supplied (though not by its own fault) by "The Catholic Directory." But we do not think so; for while we are not competent either to prove or disprove on statistical grounds the conclusions reached by Messrs. O'Brien, O'Hara and Ross, our own observations tend

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to confirm the main point, which is, that whatever the precise figures of our leakage may be, whether the half million deduced by Dr. O'Brien or some figure much lower, at best the truth is bad—very bad. Indeed, it may become fatally bad—unless, or until, realizing the force of Bishop Spaulding's words, that "the saddest truth is better than the merriest lie," we face the realities of our situation, find and apply the remedies, and make use of the truth to the advantage of the Church in the future.

It was an article in THE COMMONWEAL (10 June, 1931) by the Reverend J. Elliot Ross which furnished Dr. O'Brien with the basis of his almost appalling essay. In April the newspapers carried a despatch issued by the Associated Press stating that according to the figures of "The Official Catholic Directory" the Catholic population of the United States for 1930 was 20,091,593, an increase of 13,391 over 1929. Converts numbered 39,528, a gain of 1,296 over the previous year. Probably the majority of Catholics reading the item without analysis felt happy: Mother Church was growing, slowly perhaps, but more than holding her own amid the general weakening of religious denominations. But, as Dr. O'Brien grimly notes, a gain of only 13,391 to our total Catholic population, "in the face of the acquisition of 39,528 converts, means that the Church must have lost last year at least 26,137 born Catholics." And that terrible fact was only the beginning of the tragic story. Dr. O'Brien asked the further question: "What has become of the hundreds of thousands who were born to the 20,078,202 Catholics—the population for 1929—during the past year?" And he found that "the leakage of 26,137 born Catholics is but a tiny fraction of the real loss sustained by the Catholic Church during the past year."

Accepting the method of judging the factors of the situation advanced by Father Ross in his COMMONWEAL article—a method which, so far as we know, has not yet been successfully controverted—Dr. O'Brien proceeds with a study of the Catholic birth rate and death rate in relation to the rates for the general population, taking into account the highly conjectural effect of mixed marriages, and the continuance during the last few years of presumably Catholic immigrants from Latin America even while European immigration was practically eliminated. One fact of gratifying import emerges, in that despite the great leakage assumed to be occurring, the figures on the birth rate "seem to leave no doubt that the Church's teaching on contraception has had a pronounced and unmistakable influence upon the Catholic birth rate in the United States." For, by excess of births over deaths, "Catholics are increasing more than four and one-half times as rapidly as non-Catholics." But Dr. O'Brien does not leave his readers to luxuriate in feelings of satisfaction aroused by this statement. Inexorably he goes on to remark that, while the figures as to this fact "afford the Church grounds for gratification at this large measure of conformity of her children in a matter in which there are unquestionably strong and persistent temptations to disobey, with the example of their non-Catholic neighbors surrounding them on every side, they raise other questions which are disquieting in the extreme." After patient and exhaustive study of the statistics, which we cannot follow here, but which we are arranging to examine through an impartial and well-qualified authority on population problems, Dr. O'Brien answers those further questions thus:

"As shown previously, by excess of births over deaths the Catholic population tends to increase over four and a half times as fast as the non-Catholic population. Yet the official figures of the federal government show that, instead of advancing at a faster rate than the general population, we have suffered a relative decline. What is the explanation of this curious anomaly? The only explanation that would seem to fit the facts is that the Church is and has been for many years suffering large defections of born Catholics—defections of such appalling magnitude as to counterbalance the pronounced superiority of the Catholic birth rate over that of the non-Catholic population of the country. . . . We have unwittingly and unwillingly contributed vast annual quotas of born Catholics to swell the ever-growing army of the churchless all around us. . . . When the defection of over half a million born Catholics is distributed over all the parishes in the United States, the loss is not so palpable or perceptible as if it occurred in one solid mass. Suppose for example that the entire population of Delaware, amounting in 1930 to a total of 238,000, and Wyoming with 225,565 inhabitants, and Nevada with 91,058, were suddenly blotted out of existence by some tremendous cataclysm, the reverberations of such a loss would be heard throughout the world. Yet an army of born Catholics approximately equal to the combined population of those three states disappeared last year from the Catholic Church in the United States."

Why have they disappeared, and why is the disappearance still going on? These questions will be dealt with by Dr. O'Brien in a succeeding article, which undoubtedly will be awaited with keen if painful expectancy, for it is based not upon impressions or rumors, but will present "the results of an investigation to determine some of the causes of the Church's leakage—some of the back doors through which people pass silently and unnoticed into the growing darkness of the night." That the bearer of such dread tidings is not unaware of the unpleasant lot traditionally associated with the heralds of evil tidings is shown by his allusion to the ancient Persian custom of beheading such pestiferous persons. Modern recipients of bad news employ a no less effective though less painful way of silencing such messengers—simply by turning their own heads away and ignoring them. But we trust that no such fate will attend Messrs. O'Brien, O'Hara and Ross. What they say is either true, or not true. If not true, so much the better; but, if true, the facts must be faced.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WEEK BY WEEK

WHAT good, if any, has been accomplished by the Federal Farm Board? That Chairman Stone should have brushed aside the veils which have hitherto shrouded the activities of the greatest price-fixing establishment was, perhaps, to be expected in view of the tremendous excitement which is certain to prevail in Washington some weeks hence. He made, as the story goes, a clean break. During its brief career, the board has done considerable business. It bought 329,641,052 bushels of wheat at an average price of 81.9 cents a bushel; it acquired 1,319,809 bales of cotton at an average cost of $81.50 a bale. That means an investment of about $375,000,000, and in return the board may point to having conserved most of its cotton and the greater part of its wheat. Whether or not the farmer profited is another question. Certainly commodity prices cannot be stabilized by any such means. These prices depend, in the final analysis, upon quotations in the international market. Under normal conditions, when prices in that market are relatively stable, a pool may be relatively stable. But under the battering-ram of the past two years, a poor little dirt embankment like the Farm Board has as much chance as an icicle in the fiery grip of Satan. Possibly some influence was exerted on prices at critical moments, but even the evidence on this point is very slight. The Farm Board will go down in history with the charge of the Light Brigade.

Stabilizing Stabilization

WHEN Mr. Raskob went into politics, he declared frankly that this somewhat unusual venture was due to his interest in the liquor problem. As a man of great wealth and influence, he could hardly be accused of being "sold out" to breweries and distilleries. The problem of prohibition seemed to him a political and moral tangle which needed solving with a sharp knife. How much importance was to be attached to this move is revealed by the circumstance that Mr. Raskob, with the assistance of 90,000 other contributors, raised the Democratic campaign fund to heights hitherto undreamed of. Indeed the battle cost him personally a heap of money. And such a man does not invest minus a reason. Mr. Raskob, nothing daunted by defeat and eminently encouraged by the political omens now everywhere congregated, wants prohibition off the statute books as badly as ever. On the other hand the Governor of New York, a prominent candidate, opines that whatever may be the status of the wet-dry laws, arguments about them do not belong on Democratic platforms. Now the matter has become decidedly public, a Raskob questionnaire on the topic having been submitted to the 90,000 faithful who had spare cash in 1928. It is rumored that most of these dwell in wet Eastern states. It is likewise rumored that they would hardly have parted with sound simoleons if their allegiance to moist Mr. Smith had not been touching. The questionnaire is, as a consequence, hardly expected to add to the bulk of the original research. But its effect upon the Democratic notion of a potential standard-bearer will be observed with much interest. Mr. Raskob may split the party. On the other hand, he may get his point across. At any rate, the Democratic national campaign has begun a few months ahead of time and will bear much watching.

Mr. Raskob's Questionnaire

THERE is no reason to dwell on the disclosures of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, now it is through adding up its figures for 1930, that there was in this country a $7,000,000,000 drop in incomes and that personal revenue was halved. That would be mere masochism and all of us are already wiser and sadder enough on the basis of less stupendous but more personal reckonings. The figures of the Treasury Department revealed, however, extremely interesting economic indications that have not, we believe, been generally noted and are for this reason somewhat startling. Most noteworthy is the fact that annual incomes in the $1,000 to $5,000 category have *relatively* depreciated little as compared to the incomes above this. Specifically, there was a falling off of 12 percent in number of persons registered as receiving incomes in the first category, whereas the number of persons with incomes of $100,000 and up decreased by 58 percent. This of course is a comparison of extremes, but the means support the evidence by showing a constant increase in the percentage of difference as the class of incomes gets higher. To have stated the phenomenon in an even more startling form, would have been to compare the 12 percent decrease in the number of small incomes, with the 70 percent decrease in the numbers of persons with incomes of more than $1,000,000. These shining pinnacles of the American sky-scraping financial structure of 1928 and early '29, decreased from 504 in 1929 to 149 in 1930. The social implications of all this and of other matters too involved to be gone into here, while they may seem pretty obvious on reflection, deserve we believe careful analysis, and such analysis would have the virtue of being based on facts.

A New Dispensation?

WHAT the administration has called "the American way" of dealing with unemployment, has now been officially heard from and there is some reason to find its operation efficient. The basic conception of this way was that unemployment was an emergency and temporary thing, that it should be dealt with as such, and that departments of the federal government should not be formed to deal with the matter, as they tend to be self-perpetuating and to prolong dependence on them. In short, the American way was conceived to be the very opposite from the systems in operation in England and Germany. The final word

American Unemployment Relief

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on which system is best will, of course, wait on events. Even when there shall have been some recovery from the present depression, however, the differences in the character of the peoples and the special problems in England and Germany and the United States, would so entangle a careful writer in a thicket of qualifications that he would in the final analysis be able to declare only whether or not the American way was suited to America. With the abundance and diversity of natural resources that are available in America, the energy and adaptability of the people which has heretofore specially characterized them, and the vast reservoirs of capital here, there is every reason to believe that America will lead the way out of the depression. Then the committees of ladies working for unemployment funds, and the special committees of politicians and distinguished citizens giving spare time to similar enterprise, can quietly and easily fade out of existence with (and this is no pun) sighs of relief both from themselves and those who have been the targets of their efforts. There is a cheerful, busy-body, and from some points of view provincial, neighborliness that is characteristic of American social service, even in metropolitan communities, and it has been a wise provision to enlist this available energy to deal with the present emergency.

Science and the Future

IT IS a distinct achievement, just now, to review the possibilities of applied science optimistically, and make one's point. Efficiency and correlation have reached a pitch of perfection in part of our world for which we are all paying so heavily, in our various ways, that our imagination and sympathy are not immediately taken by any further reference to these qualities. We are much more likely to be attracted by pictures of small units of society living an uncomplicated bucolic existence, after the manner of the pre-machinery period, largely sustained by their own efforts and independent of the rest of mankind. Writing in the *Herald Tribune,* Professor Harold de Wolf Fuller reminds us, with some definiteness, that we are committed to the scientific dispensation, to the highly interrelated world, whether we will or no; and what is quite remarkable, he succeeds in tracing a hopeful and believable course for our future, a course in which more, not less, knowledge and correlation will be the necessary and fruitful order of the day. His opening challenge defines the millenium which he probably does not expect to arrive, but toward which he feels it is appointed that we, with our special resources, should work: "Suppose that industry knew not only how to produce but how much to produce and where to distribute. Suppose that the tragedy of misfits could be reduced to a small minimum; that unemployment were not a primary problem and social consciousness were the usual thing. Suppose that the passing of laws increased the respect for laws. Suppose that movements and reforms did not go merrily on according to the clamor of the moment, and that power and leadership were the products of wisdom. Suppose that human nature lived up to the blessings of this machine age instead of living down to its mechanical perfection."

IT MAY be said that to formulate these ideals is to recognize their impossibility: that "human nature" is the trouble. But is it ever rational to subscribe to this blanket counsel of despair? "Human nature" has had its innings, and will have them; yet Professor Fuller is undoubtedly speaking in the terms to which we will have, sooner or later, to revert. The trouble, he reminds us, is not too much efficiency and order, but too little, in a world nevertheless keyed to efficiency and order. "Today about a quarter of a man's life is scientific, the rest is hit-or-miss." The only hope is to reclaim that three-fourths. If, according to the truism that we all repeat, we have released forces we don't know how to control, we have no choice but to learn to control them. There are means at hand for learning to rectify "the balance which has been so seriously disturbed," and, "by concerted effort," for promoting "the best interests of mankind as a whole." We have, for instance, an established and developing technique of research. We have a multitude of scientists, in the broad sense of the term, trained in the most honorable tradition of disinterestedness. Chief of all, we have the practice of, and familiarity with, coördinated action. It is this last for which Professor Fuller puts in his main plea. He points out obvious positive examples: the revolutionary effects on present-day medicine of correlating the findings of chemistry and physics; the focusing of psychiatric and psychological knowledge on sociological problems; the tendency toward organic synthesis in the universities of which the classic case is the founding of the ambitious Institute of Human Relations at Yale. His negative examples are more telling. There is the failure of economic arguments to prevent war, because, though complete, they are too narrow, neglecting "backgrounds and perspectives in several fields . . . pertinent to the subject —the moral field, for one." There is the present colossal failure in business leadership, because the leaders are not "attentive students of history and social philosophers as well." We find this trust in the resources, if not the habits, of our world, sound. And we find it very interesting to speculate on whither this implicit pushing back of the definition of the purposes of human activity, will lead.

For Liturgical Art

AFTER a long period of discussion and organization, the Liturgical Arts Society has definitely announced its birth. Younger artists and architects in particular, interested in the work of the Church and eager to profit by the experience gained by older men, have done heroic work in launching this effort to win proper regard for the liturgical spirit and law. Among the first corporate endeavors is the publication of *Liturgical Arts,* a magazine devoted to everything

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that comes under its title. The initial number will be mailed within the near future, and will contain papers by Professor C. R. Morey, the Abbot Herwegen, Mrs. Hildreth Meière and the Reverend Edwin Ryan. Many aspects of Christian art will be considered, and the number illustrates very well what a quarterly of this character can effectively discuss. Meanwhile the society itself is ready for many other undertakings. Its president, Mr. Charles D. Maginnis, is obviously one of the better-known architects of the United States, and—less manifestly, except to the discerning eyes of a small group—one of the relatively few men who live and move and have their being in the spirit of service to Catholic beauty. Under his leadership, which is assured the coöperation of many able workers in art, the society should rapidly develop the finest kind of activity.

Scholar's Progress

HISTORY scholars throughout the country have reason to be gratified that the New York Historical Society at the recent celebration of its 127th anniversary conferred the gold medal of the society on Wilberforce Eames, distinguished historical writer, bibliographer and librarian of the New York Public Library. The society's gold medal has been conferred only once before. For some fifty years Mr. Eames has been occupied with a task well described by President Eliot, when Harvard conferred an honorary degree on Mr. Eames, of making our book collections readily available for students. There is scarcely a historian in this country who is not indebted to Mr. Eames for his bibliographic work that has made original historical sources comparatively easy to consult. At the anniversary celebration an oil painting of Mr. Eames by DeWitt Lockman was unveiled which is to have a place in the New York Historical Society's valuable collection. A recent bequest has made it possible for the society to complete its building on Central Park West and a many storied addition for storage and workrooms at the rear of the present structure. This will give an old and very worthy institution which struggled along to accomplish a great work for more than a century, facilities that it deserves. The conferment of the Eames medal is a worthy occasion for the announcement of the promising outlook for the future that the New York Historical Society now enjoys.

Memo to a Crusader

WE ARE glad to note that a Western Union official, Mr. F. W. Lienau, has interdicted the use of the alleged verb "contact" by that organization, or at least has stirringly stated the conviction that it ought not "to soil any good Western Union paper." Indeed, Mr. Lienau's feelings go even beyond our own: "Somewhere there cumbers this fair earth with his loathsome presence a man who, for the common good, should have been destroyed in early childhood. He is the originator of the hideous vulgarism of using 'contact' as a verb. So long as we can meet, get in touch with, make the acquaintance of, be introduced to, call on, interview or talk to people, there can be no apology for 'contact.'" This—at least the first part of it—is a shade more emphasis than we should allow ourselves, perhaps, but we enter the qualification mildly. We are all for Mr. Lienau. He sounds like the man to deal with certain other things that afflict us: with "name'n*ad*dress," for example, which is all but universal; with people who "meet up with" someone; with styles that "slenderize"; with logicians who "infer" when they should "imply," and talkers who beg one to "give me a ring." When he disposes of these, we will undertake to find him plenty of others. And, incidentally, if he is a real crusader, concerned with the real dignity and freedom of the human mind, he will reprobate the cliché no less than the vulgar. What, then, of those quite impredicable ready-made messages—to mother, to father, to the newly wedded and the newly bereft, to anyone in any conceivable situation from having flown the Atlantic to having produced triplets—which the telegraph company sets, numbered and waiting, before the message-sending public?

THE OLD FASHIONED CITY

SOCIOLOGY has grown popular, which does not by any means signify that it has grown sensible. The mind of the country cannot as yet be termed aware of faults in the social structure which the hurricane of the past two years has laid bare. This is largely the result of immature and ineffective leadership. To be sure the United States has probably never before been so richly endowed with good teachers of the social sciences; but there is a seemingly unbridgeable gap between their studious carefulness and the rash slogans which multiform advertising carries to the citizen as pearls of ultra-modern wisdom. Sociology is, therefore, the most justly suspect of all high-sounding terms. It is that science in which statistics can still be used to prove what they certainly do not prove, and in which ideas can still run as wild as they did in fifteenth-century physics. Likewise it is the point of view to which people who have clung to a few liberalistic conventions may be converted without more intellectual effort than they customarily make.

Yet there are a number of apparent sociological truths to which more and more attention should be given. One of these was stressed recently by Mr. Clarence S. Stein, a New Jersey architect, who said: "The present-day city is the most antiquated machine that we have. Its structure has not been changed since the very beginning of cities. Its disease has always been what it is now—congestion. The New York that we know today will disappear because it is economically unsound." Such strictures are by no means original. Any number of first-rate thinkers have pointed out now this, now that, aspect of the situation. Le Corbusier has drawn up a most effective critique of city

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

structure from the point of view of the builder. And quite demonstrably a large part of the distress—of many kinds—which the world now experiences must be traced to this unsolved problem. One would, however, search in vain for any address by a prominent American statesman or industrialist on this subject. The public as a whole is hardly aware that the problem exists.

Little, indeed, is to be learned from the mere antithesis of country and big town. That one does not have the advantages of the other, or that the limitations of both are great, seems quite obvious. The question of the modern city is a different one entirely. This city appeared as the social instrument with which mankind purposed to utilize the advantages of the machine, and of course we must be careful not to identify machines with factories. Ships, railroads and even such devices as the stock exchange are integral parts of the modern mechanization process. Even so the factory has the most direct effect upon the making of a city because of the way in which it influences the lives and habits of millions.

No doubt the city was, for a good many years, a practicable, economical and even healthful institution. Though it tended from the beginning to breed forms of vice, disease and oppression, it was virtually the sole instrument with which social progress could be effected in a growing world. In other words, the city made technology possible, and technology is obviously a good thing. To argue today that machines ought to be abolished is a form of putting the cart before the horse which is permissible only because there is no danger that the advice will be accepted. Doubtless there are some anti-social forms of mechanization, just as there are anti-social forms of anything else. But they constitute a fairly minor appendage to our system of existing.

It is the city rather which is under fire, because the city is inadequate. First of all, it is utterly uneconomical under present conditions. In 1904 the celebrated German economist Adolf Weber published a book in which he studied the economic consequences of modern city dwelling. He showed that while the population of London had increased by 1,730,000 between 1870 and 1890, land values had risen still faster, so that every new London citizen added $400 to the value of the city's real property. The price of a quarter acre in the heart of Chicago increased 2,800 times in twenty years. A certain part of Berlin even grew 100,000 times more precious within thirty years. This development obviously meant several things. First the amount of land available to the average citizen grew steadily smaller, until finally the perching of a family in three rooms was normal even in middle-class society. Perhaps only the Lord can know what happened to the poor—to those countless thousands in all cities, doomed to exist, with wife and children, in some hole in the wall.

Though a whole complex of normal and religious difficulties is bound up with this development, other aspects of the situation are, perhaps, economically more important. First, industry had necessarily to earn the increased production costs imposed by rising realty values. When one asks where so much that has been earned now is, since it has not gone into wages or even dividends, the answer is: into property increments, often speculatively inflated, but more normally imposed by sheer population density. On the other hand, small property owners are much more directly exposed to the rise and ebb of prices. When work is plentiful, realty values, whether of home or apartment sites, go up like rockets; when a slump appears, mortgages collapse in wholesale lots. To this total there must be added increasingly heavy taxation, caused by expensiveness of complex city engineering. During hard times, municipalities cannot foot their bills. The resultant deterioration of high class mortgage investments is one of the phenomena of the times.

Nor are the human costs of this inefficient mechanism less obvious. We in the United States live too close to the era of city expansion to be wholly aware of what has been happening. Europe—especially Germany and Great Britain—are already facing the real consequences. A recently published book, by Professor W. F. Bruck, asks this question: is the construction of cities a form of perpetuated unemployment? He argues that the number of factories laid idle had increased steadily, and that it will remain, for a long time to come, impossible to augment greatly the number of new plants. It follows that cities cannot grow without at the same time watching their unemployment figures increase. And of course the impact of this logic is the real force underlying that morbid fear which constitutes the chief reason why family limitation is so widely practised. Commenting on Bruck's book, Karl Muth, writing in *Hochland,* quotes Dostoievski: "There is something sacramental about the earth, about a plot of ground. Children must be born on such a plot, and not on pavement. Later on one can live on the pavement, to be sure; but the overwhelming part of the nation must be born and reared on the soil, on the plot of ground, where grain and trees likewise grow."

But is there any way out? The answer to this question lies less in any immediate, practical suggestions one may offer than in the effort one makes to awake public consciousness to the right dimensions of the problem. We in America are simply miles behind the procession of social events. Jammed right between solid hard facts and beautiful theories, the public looks to the right and the left of the truth which is squarely in front of it. It cannot be a question of abolishing machines. It cannot be a question of simply settling people back on the farms. The point is simply this: how to rebuild the modern city in a manner calculated to make it an efficient business instrument, the servant of social sanity, and less of a moral handicap to the individual. The answer is not so difficult to come by as it may seem.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MEXICO UNDER OBSERVATION

By JAMES A. MAGNER

Some change in the American attitude toward Mexico has been discernible recently. It is, as the author of the present paper suggests, "easy to go to Mexico in the hope of having one's worst suspicions justified." But of late many citizens of the United States have lost part of their overweening confidence in their own system. They are prepared to notice the contrary virtues of the Latin-Indian South—virtues which even the myriad attendant weaknesses cannot dim. Father Magner's paper is that of a very sympathetic observer, and we believe it will interest our readers uncommonly.—The Editors.

THERE are two surprising extremes of popular judgment, or, let us say, of viewpoint, which come to the attention of every student of the Mexican problem. One is a conviction of the iniquity of the revolutionary régime, which has slowly but surely been upsetting the economic status and religious ideal of old Spanish Mexico. The other amounts to a confident hope that the efforts of this same régime will be successful in doing away with an outworn feudal system of property and a stagnant outlook in religion and education. Where lies the golden mean? Can it be that the revolutionists are moved by a totally bad philosophy or that their declarations of reform are insincere? Or shall we, with naive trust, look for a new and more glorious future rising from the ashes of destruction?

Our sympathies are almost necessarily lodged with movements which act in accordance with our particular philosophies of life. A non-Catholic in Mexico will probably sympathize with the anti-Church program of the government, even though he is forced by evidence to see insanity in its gestures. A Catholic will probably denounce this program whole-heartedly, even though he may be compelled to admit that there is some justification for it. An American capitalist, unacquainted with the traditional Spanish concept of property which relates all ownership to government tenure, will appeal to Congress every time his holdings in Mexico are manipulated by the Mexican government. The average American, incapable of conceiving a feudal system of agricultural development, and blind to the same limitations when they occur in American industrialism, will grit his teeth with indignation at the spectacle of peasantry and peonage.

Addressing a group of Americans in Mexico City last summer, a native spokesman raised the pertinent question of whether Americans are in a position to understand Mexico fairly. The superior attitude which we adopt, the principles by which we act, the suppositions upon which we form our judgments, are apt to galvanize our minds against a sympathetic study of this most intricate problem. It is easy to go to Mexico in the hope of having one's worst suspicions justified.

There can be no doubt that, as a group, we are reformers, with emphasis on uplift. This uplift, it must be confessed, is not always based upon a study of problems, but consists in many cases of transferring our own particular ideals of life to another people and of insisting, for our peace of mind, that they use the same standard methods and products which we feel have made us great and happy. Our canned goods, our automobiles, our radios, our chewing gum, our Sunday supplements, have become such an integral part of our lives, that it seems inconceivable any other nation should find life bearable without them. Then there is our passion for cleanliness, so sorely jolted by facts abroad that, in our desire to be liberal toward dirt and dirty ensembles, we take refuge in the expressions "quaint" and "picturesque." Still more dominant in our social consciousness is the desire that all should fit in groups, do the right thing at the right time, sit and rise and kneel together, applaud together, wear the same costume and preserve a current of respectability.

It is true that all peoples, even the most depraved tribes of the jungle, have their tabus and their codes of respectability; but few groups are so circumspectly standardized and proper as we are. Perhaps it was with this in mind that the same speaker, a Roman Catholic himself, declared Catholic churches in the United States seemed almost like Protestant meeting-houses, compared with his native Mexican shrines. He was thinking of the contrast between the restrained, sedate ornament which he found in American churches and the buxom baroque in his own. In American congregations he beheld a clock-like uniformity of devotion as contrasted with the spontaneous individual movements of Mexican worshipers. And in the American churches, he discovered no such picturesque human ensembles as he was used to in Mexico, humble Indians, barefoot and gaily blanketed, beside their more bourgeois compatriots, grand madames arriving in limousines, and simple peasant women depositing their bundles of sticks or wares outside the door, dusky complexions and complexions not so dusky, prayers with tears and prayers with laughter.

There is something exuberant in the simplicity of spirit possessed by the Latins, Indo-Latins and Orientals, which Northerners cannot comprehend. A Northern Catholic can come closer to them than a Protestant, because the Catholic Church, deeply influenced everywhere by the emotional Latin temperament, breaks through the cold bonds of dogma, and expresses its devotion in pageantry and ceremony, music and art. A Protestant, traditionally hostile to this kind of thing in religion, may view the bleeding statues of Christ and the weeping Madonnas of Mexican churches only as gruesome displays of bad taste

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

calculated to astonish the superstitious people and hold them in a bondage of fear. The splendor of golden altars and carved sanctuaries, bristling with marble cherubs and riotous with plaster clouds and baroque sun rays, will probably leave him struggling between admiration for the artist and disgust for the Church that could, in his mind, waste the substance of the people on such lavish expenditures when their stomachs, perhaps, were empty.

Just such a remark was made to me at Cholula, where the number of shrines almost corresponds to the days of the year. I had come from inspecting a painfully ornate church decorated by the native workmen in the most unrestrained native manner, and I moved across the road to witness the ceremony of laying a corner-stone for a new rural school. A native band, in overalls and straw sombreros, was blowing nobly to produce a tune for the occasion. The dark-skinned, bright-eyed children were lined up by their teachers, who directed their well-intentioned but distracted singing of a national anthem. It was a touching scene. This remark, however, carried a pungent implication. There could be no doubt that these people were extremely poor, and their children were not overfed. It was obvious that the time and materials required to decorate the church must have taxed the people heavily. Was it worth the sacrifice? Had it been pushed to extremes? Would the money have been better spent on an economic unlift of the people? Or, all things considered, was it the most suitable expression and outlet for their genius?

Meanwhile, as I was sharing these thoughts with others of American persuasion, the ceremony of the rural school was being engineered with rockets and speeches. It was to appear the beginning of an emancipation, a new era of enlightenment and hope. The children were wearing holy medals, and some carried rosary beads, as if by second nature. But could it be that the Church, which had given them their religious faith and redeemed their monotonous lives with a spiritual hope, should have been a stone around their necks in their touching struggle for knowledge and advancement? Such would be the judgment of some observers.

At present, there are some seven thousand rural schools besides a number of educational bands, known as cultural missions, which function as institutes for home economics, defense of health, recreation and agricultural methods. Some of these experimental groups are stationed in definite centers. Others are sent out in groups to study means of social and cultural action among the people, to bring together the teachers in remote places, to gather original native materials, and in general to make the rural schools into centers of communal life. Although officials are showing only the results of their most recent efforts, it is clear that the Mexican government is doing things for education.

Particular pains, however, are taken to pass over the four centuries of effort, contributions and salutary influences of the Catholic Church in education. No mention is made of, nor is regret expressed for, the numerous convent schools and academies of the religious orders, now closed by the same beneficent government, and remaining in ruins as dismal relics of persecution. The achievements of priests and nuns in the fusion of Spanish and Indian cultures are respectfully ignored. Observers who have seen but half the picture, or who are unprepared to consider the vicissitudes of history and the Catholic philosophy of education, will find it easy to conclude that the Catholic Church has done little for these people except to exploit them.

Fundamentally, the question comes down to what a church should do for the people. The Mexican government, in its more disinterested mood, declares that secular education, hygiene, improvement of working conditions, and better trade relations, with sufficient personal or communal property to insure a living, are what a man needs most in life; and it maintains that the Church and religion cannot assure him of these things. Modern Protestantism, interpreting the work of Christ as that of social redemption rather than of spiritual redemption through grace, has adopted somewhat the same viewpoint of life, and is assuming the attitude of an unofficial agent of the state. Ministers of every denomination, of foreign citizenship, are forbidden to function in Mexico. Nevertheless, there are foreign ministers in Mexico, classified as social workers, conducting cultural forums in place of religious services. The Y. M. C. A. also, while declaring its advantages as non-sectarian, is listed on a Protestant report as a Protestant organization. The obvious effect of this outlook and of these methods is education of the people to a more pragmatic view of life. As a rule, Mexicans do not become devout Protstants.

From such a viewpoint, the Catholic concept of religion as directed toward a personal relationship with God must indeed appear vaguely mystic and impractical, and the idea of a church as a house of God for the actual presence of Christ, worthy of artistic adornment even at the sacrifice of personal comfort, must seem mediaeval and remote. An American Protestant who has worked along missionary lines in Latin-American countries assured me that he appreciated this mystic appeal of the Catholic Church to the simple folk of Mexico, but expressed the belief that there must surely be a large group of more scientific and social-minded persons in Mexico to whom Protestantism would make an appeal. The Catholic Church, it is true, is not an agrarian or economic institution, nor is its primary purpose that of social uplift. The Church holds up a standard of life which is based on spiritual values, and not precisely scientific advancement or social comfort. Can it be, however, that a true code of spiritual values can afford to ignore the advance of science or not involve a program of social improvement?

At the same time, there is growing up a spirit of repudiation, to disown the cultural influences of Spain

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and place the cultural advance of the country on a more native basis. This spirit is exemplified in the murals of Diego Rivera, who, by the way, is partly Semitic. His celebrated works in the palace of Cortez at Cuernavaca are representations of Spanish cruelty and ecclesiastical greed. He represents the cathedrals of Mexico as being built by Indians under the lash of Spanish soldiers, while the monks look on and take, with cunning hands, the offerings of terrified natives. Such representations are confusing and quite unfair to the cause of Christianity, because they appear to sum up the Spanish contribution to Mexico and to represent the Church as a foreign aggressor. The Mexican government, which commissioned these murals, is bending backward, we may say, to stress the importance of the Aztec culture, not because it has anything particularly definite to offer or even because it exists in reality, but to create an indigenous culture which can dispense with the ministrations of the Church.

Of course, it is quite too much to suppose that all the leaders in a modern state, even one which presents a Catholic front, would subscribe to the Catholic faith or a Catholic policy. Hardly more than one-fifth of Mexico may be called actively Catholic in the sense of making a reasoned and practical profession of faith. Many Indian tribes are as pagan today as they were when Cortez set foot in Mexico. For considerably more than a million Indians, the Spanish language is practically unknown. Such masses, suffering under a faulty economic system, can easily be whipped into revolution and made to feel that the Church has been the cause of their oppression. It is a grave mistake to conclude, as many persons do, that the Church has failed in its social mission for Mexico and must give way to a secular philosophy of life. The truth is that the Church has not failed, but that its mission is far from complete. If there were failure on the Church's part, it would be a failure to recognize this fact.

It is impossible to exonerate completely any group from such difficulties as Mexico is laboring under. Besides, exoneration is not always the path to progress. Progress will be made when the progressive elements join their energies to solve the problems of the country. If the woes of Mexico in the past can be traced in large part to a mutual distrust between secular and ecclesiastical elements, nothing short of a friendly adaptation of programs, a more sympathetic social outlook, and genuine coöperation between the two can make for the advancement of these children of God. The Catholic Church is not so conservative that it cannot meet the needs of the modern age, and the Mexican government is not so advanced that it can afford to reject the religious faith of its people in Christ, through the ministrations of the Catholic Church.

OUR ORDERLY NOVELISTS

By FRANCIS X. CONNOLLY

FICTION of course is only a form, and we have grown used to its impressions upon a great variety of subjects. The twentieth century has witnessed narrative treatment of everything from the theology contained in "Father Malachy's Miracle" to the obvious social satire of Sinclair Lewis. And while it is entirely true that the dramatization of important problems has stimulated much profitable thought, it is nevertheless debatable whether such extensiveness of material is conducive to a genuinely fruitful culture, whether the easy and genial acceptance of everything as the material of fiction does not indicate a craftsman's dependence on device for its own sake. Our modern democracy of education, with respect both to subject and object, has brought the author to the engineer's table and the doctor's office, but it has also brought the engineer and doctor to the author's study.

We do know that the novel has become an instrument of personal use, although whether or not this conversion is a fashion introduced by journalism or a definite logical process of incapable artists we cannot be certain. Charles Norris chooses to represent in "Seed" a profound moral problem; John Galsworthy employs "The Forsyte Saga" to set forth his social commentary; Upton Sinclair explains a personal resentment in "The Goose Step." And while such fundamental discussions cannot be avoided in any treatment of human character, the primacy of the thesis in the modern novel suggests certain valid elements in the contemporary temper. When Bromfield or Ellen Glasgow or Joseph Hergesheimer, to mention only a few very divergent characters, offer their latest ware, it is not very difficult to penetrate to the bare syllogism which for so long a time has been the forbidding skeleton of the pious story. The efforts of creators of fiction have been painstakingly aprioristic, which strangely enough does not seem to shock the reviewer whose introductory paragraph rarely lacks a huzza for experimental science. In fact, the extraordinary American capacity to coördinate the abilities of men and machinery has filtered into the liberal art of writing, and the average critical reader can readily detect the mechanism, smooth, powered, efficient, occasionally amazing, which functions behind the elaborate artifices which a Komroff or a Wilder has substituted for life. We have hammered fiction into an engine to project our ideas upon a receptive public.

Henry Seidel Canby in a rather dejected editorial note remarked that the American magazine fiction on the whole was much too pointed, too respondent to the editorial demand for a "click" ending, to achieve that final aggravating incompleteness which is the tissue of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

art. This note is even more predominant in the novel. Apart from the clique of pessimism, who after all are doomed to an essential attitude different from the more artificial concern of form, the great majority of novelists are dedicated to the very rhetorical device of illustrating a principle. A young Midwesterner conceives a general disapprobation of the American family, based no doubt upon a certain amount of close observation. Granted assiduity, economic compulsion and stimulating companionship he produces a book, invariably a novel, which very nicely sets forth his views so that the last chapter is little more than a peroration of an eloquent and rather rigid argument. Or a young lady grows bitter, if not against society in general, then against education or wage-slavery, and unless she is completely inarticulate we may expect a mincing apologia or an ineffective felinity against a convent school or an unsympathetic dean. We have very few transcripts of life, less penetrations into life; we have only an argument about civilization.

Perhaps this is a reason for our lack of great characters. In the great wave of successful novels throughout the last two decades, one is hard pressed to recall memorable characters. H. G. Wells created automatons; Bennett's nearest approach to real personality was the trivial "Denry the Audacious"; Soames Forsyte, who is perhaps the most elaborate portrait of the modern man, certainly does not achieve complete distinction. Characters have had little hand in controlling the events with which they are surrounded. They have become opinions emancipated in print, egos in disguise, dreams breathed upon, in fact everything save real beings made more real by intelligence. And because they are not real, because life is not the measure of fiction but fiction the measure of life, there is a certain exactness about them, a completeness, a definity.

It is indeed a very interesting paradox that this new tendency toward orderliness originated in the modern aversion to order. Now when we have developed the novel to a technical neatness which is so often mistaken for intelligence, we seem to have lost all the old virtues of the form. Formerly in the haphazard cumulativeness of a Thackeray, in the dissipated energies of a Dickens, there was ordination, direction. An artistic prudence was attempting to balance the terrifying sensationality of a new industrial era with the slower comprehensions and the less expansive emotions of the human soul. The artists of another generation were interested in cementing certain hard emotional patterns to protect man from the frictions of an almost inhuman life. These protections were derived not from a vague sentimental theory but from the common primitive emotions. Love, for instance, however romantic, has been continuously through human history a definitely successful armament against the world; charity "blesses him that gives and him that takes"; humility, like the magic cloak, permits its wearer to pass unscathed through the jarring strifes. Even sentiment may be honest.

The erection of human breakwaters and fortifications had been accomplished, as I have said, somewhat haphazardly. There was very little tidiness or arrangement, very little artificial bunkering and ingenious plotting. There was no need for it. Life after all is considerably haphazard. And in the pursuit of personality one cannot confine the hunt to the well-marked lanes. But can our novelists honestly appreciate the depths of personality? Granted at least that their interest in the manifold social, ethical and political problems confronting the generation is sincere and that their attempts to balance and adjust are earnest, have they the vision and the strength to provide the reassurance that humanity demands from art? The question is whether or not the fundamentally unintellectual character of the modern world has so disturbed reflective powers that the novelist can no longer offer anything save interesting opinion.

While many of our famous (and dated) authors, such as Theodore Dreiser, who with Walt Whitman is rapidly becoming an American tradition, still subscribe to the unhappy cult of science, it is nevertheless increasingly true that the more progressive and important figures in letters, comparative unknowns like Mr. Cozzens with his "S.S. San Pedro," Bruce Marshall and George Davis, write with a consciousness of the breakdown of the literary philosophy of the twenties. There is a general unmistakable tendency of the new author toward integration, toward the reconstruction of the objective attitude. Their efforts merely indicate that the critical and academic denials of the necessity of intelligence do not dissipate the essential contradiction between chaos and art, that although they are the *rarae aves* of literature there is nevertheless a genuine craving for standards. Lacking the ordination necessary to grasp the real relation to personality, the great majority of modern novelists, a Huxley in "Point Counterpoint," a Wilder in "The Woman of Andros," a Hardy in his scientific dissection, a William Faulkner surgeoning a literary cadaver, have been forced by the time-spirit into a passion for orderliness, into the achievement of a shadowy form which substitutes a puzzled satisfaction for the passionate delight of attained truth. Ideas imposed upon life have lent us the illusion of intelligence, but the natural fluidity of substance, seeping as it does through rational constrictions and defying everything save organic shape, passed with the spiritual realism which had been the fiber of the older novelists.

What is to be done to reclaim the novel? To those who appreciate the tremendous significance of great human documents like Undset's "Kristin Lavransdatter" or Thackeray's "Vanity Fair," the passage of fiction into the hands of school teachers, day laborers, convicts, business men and industrious clergymen constitutes a grave mistake. We are aware that for purely commercial reasons there has been a demand for fresh opinion on jaded topics. Even the "quality" magazines have sponsored contests designed to stimulate

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

production among divers inarticulate or amateur story-tellers. But is this not a confession of weakness? People are tired of one man's opinion, or of another's attitude. When substance is lacking, novelty is the sole agreeable feature. Reform must come as usual from the young men. Life, which has been reduced to the common sensations, has forced art to reproduce aspects of these sensations. In the mad attempt to set up new forces man has taken too little pains to widen the mental perspective. Objects, new and immense, had crowded upon him and especially in this age of communication when practically all nations are immediately conscious of the latest mystery, man has not had the time to assimilate and evaluate his own progress. He has not caught up to himself. Indications are now pointing to the approaching adolescence, but no more, of the scientific man. What is the novel to do? Certainly the mere climactic visualization of a stratum of human life, however forceful or however vitalized with new blood, cannot be a genuine artistic accomplishment. The novelist cannot merely observe and report. If there is to be any worthy succession to this literary mode which has preserved its hegemony from the time of Samuel Richardson, there must be a departure of its young creators from the mechanical method in which it is now almost crystallized.

The new artist faces the difficulty of adjusting mankind to the time-spirit, of providing armor for the successful resistance of whirling sensations. James Truslow Adams in the September *Scribner's,* apropos the "Tempo of American Life," pleads for "an intelligent ordering of our existence, for selection from among the goods of life, for the exercise of self-control—in a word, for intelligence and will." Man may be blown to bits, spiritually as well as physically, by the centrifugal forces he has loosed. He has denied intelligence, it is true; he has claimed that will is merely desire, but in practice he craves order and absolute standards. And art, always concerned with harmony, must in addition to a material order offer a rounded spiritual one as well. Bitterness, despair, savage license are intolerable. The novel needs strong spirits, leisurely, objective, attuned, to weave life into a pattern, to select and intensify the really important things, to raise the spirit above the haze and the dust settled upon an industrial world, to concentrate the habits not upon pieces flying from machines, but upon the meaning of machinery.

Our orderly mechanical fiction seldom penetrates beyond the shiny exterior of life—beyond money and business and lusts and commonplace reactions. Cinemas and journals pour variety into the same mold. There are many Iris Marches in modern fiction, but only one Marian Forrester; there are Babbitts and Griffiths, but not a Babbitt or a Griffith. We are adept in discussing the crowd, the type, the average, but we have few examples, outside the novels of Miss Cather and possibly Mrs. Wharton, of a successful presentation of the personality. And we have no real characters simply because we have lost the meaning of character, because mental habits have dissolved and temperaments are too heterogeneous to admit of precise definition.

The failure of the novelists to appreciate the reality of character in their arbitrary orderliness is evident also from the failure to interpret mood. The marvel of "Death Comes for the Archbishop" and "Shadows on the Rock" was the complete and continuous maintenance of mood. But in order to create a glow about a personality, the personality itself must first be known. Even in the easily investigable areas of business life, there is the tendency in fiction toward either jingoistic glorification or immature scolding. Its unimportant necessity is overlooked; it remained for J. B. Priestley to give it its almost perfect setting in "Angel Pavement." And of all the books concerned directly or indirectly with the war I am aware of one (Roger Chauvire's "A Sword in the Soul") which accounted for the basic glory of human nature.

With the avenues of personality and mood cut from the artist's approach, permitting only the half-way road into the self, most of the men who seek to escape from the welter of sensationalism are forced into sheer action, or a problem novel. And notwithstanding the fact that this discussion is concerned with the essential point of artistic vision, it is not impertinent to indicate the sketchiness of the framework substituted for lost sinews. Novelists, together with their fellow craftsmen of the short story, have developed formulas, so that aside from some pert social criticism the art of fiction, bereft of the didactic, can accomplish little more than ordinary entertainment.

It is not impossible to reduce Galsworthy to a series of sociological propositions, which he has ingeniously spun out in narrative form, and in the attempt to slough off the stream-of-consciousness method, Mr. Stribling for one has fallen into historical explanation. The instinctive repugnance of the artist may drive him away from sheer subjectivism; it can never prod him into the intimate understanding of life that is both the purpose and achievement of his art.

The neat disorder of modern literature is not principled, therefore, by a culture. It results actually from the perversity of a nature that defies cultivation. After all, human reason which in art develops and arranges important psychical phases cannot be expected to harmonize personality when modern intellectual anarchy disturbs its balance and baffles its penetration into nature. The present effort to build up the structure of the novel dates from the beginning of our organically deficient culture. Cervantes's apparent formlessness in "Don Quixote" is artistically blameless because Cervantes coördinated and enlarged nature itself. Quixote had the healthy tissues of life which swelled and fattened upon the food of fact. The modern novel, with a damaged spiritual organism, grew accretively and artificially. The uniformity of life is deceptive in its surprises, and inorganic variety is painfully constant. What is needed in the novel is life, and then perhaps we can have "in a word, intelligence and will."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AMERICA WET

BY FREDERIC DAMRAU

DOES prohibition reduce the consumption of alcohol? Opinions differ. One of the best means of judging this question fairly is by the number of deaths from alcoholism and diseases due to excessive drinking. But figures quoted by prohibitionists clash with those presented by the opposing forces. Who is right?

The wets, on the one hand, compare the present death rate from alcoholism with that of 1920, when deaths from this cause were at a very low figure. Adherents of prohibition, on the other hand, compare today with 1910-1914, when rum reigned supreme. Neither is a fair comparison alone.

This article attempts to show conditions as they are. In unbiased fashion, it presents the results of an unprejudiced investigation, made with the coöperation of public health authorities, hospitals and the Census Bureau. It compares typical states in this country with the Canadian provinces of Quebec and Ontario, where liquor is sold under government control.

Admitting that excessive alcohol is a poison, it would certainly seem wise to protect public health from its effects. But has prohibition accomplished this? Are more or fewer people dying now from alcoholism and alcoholic diseases than before prohibition?

Actual figures from the Federal Census Bureau show that deaths from alcoholism rose from 1910 to 1913 (in proportion to the population), decreased and then rose high in 1916. With our entrance into the World War they declined sharply until in 1920, the first year of prohibition, only one person in every 100,000 died of alcoholism. But taking the country as a whole, every year since then a greater number of people have died from alcoholism.

In New York state more people in proportion to the population are dying of alcoholism than at any time in the last twenty years, with the exception of 1916. Statistics furnished by the Bureau of the Census of the United States Department of Commerce prove that over six times as many people died from alcoholism in 1928 as in 1920.

In New York City, probably considered the wettest spot in the country, more persons are dying each year from alcoholism. In fact, the 1927 figure was the highest in nearly fifteen years—and eight times that of 1920. In 1929 the death toll had risen to ten times that of 1920! These figures are paralleled by more arrests for intoxication. It is common knowledge that, for the person who does not discriminate as to what he drinks, prohibition simply does not exist in New York City. Speakeasies are everywhere. The hip flask has taken the place of the corner saloon.

Alcohol in excess is recognized as one of the leading causes of insanity. Official figures prove that the advent of prohibition caused a prompt drop in the number of admissions to state hospitals in New York due to alcoholic insanity. However, this disease is steadily progressing, and admissions are now more than four times as frequent as in 1920 and greater than in any of the years immediately preceding prohibition, with the single exception of the war-time year of 1917.

The increase in insanity due to excessive use of alcohol, or drinking of poisoned hooch, is not limited to New York City. It is general throughout the country. Federal census figures show that admissions to state hospitals as a result of abuse of alcohol increased 60 percent from 1922 to 1927.

Cirrhosis, or hardening, of the liver is due to steady tippling rather than periodical sprees. There is reason to believe that abolition of the corner saloon has diminished the extent of tippling as compared with pre-war times. However, the trend today is definitely back in the direction of more steady tippling, so that cirrhosis of the liver may again become as common as in the days of the corner saloon. Figures furnished by the Bureau of the Census of the United States Department of Commerce show a decline in the number of deaths due to cirrhosis of the liver, beginning with the period of war-time prohibition. Deaths due to this cause in 1928 were only half as common as in 1910 and 15 percent greater than in 1920, when the alcoholic tide was at its ebb.

So far as New York state is concerned, it is evident that more people suffer from drinking than before prohibition; that they are inclined to go on periodical sprees and guzzle their liquor down to the last drop rather than take it with what we used to call moderation; but that, although tippling is again beginning to increase, there are fewer steady tipplers now than formerly.

Kansas has long been considered a typically dry state. Recently, however, controversy about its actual aridity has waxed hot and furious. What are the facts, uncolored by prejudice? Ever since deaths from alcoholism were recorded twenty years ago, Kansas has had, year after year, one of the lowest death rates from alcoholism anywhere in the United States. While the Kansas rate has doubled since national prohibition began, it still is the lowest in the country, except Utah. But, curiously enough, Kansas has always had a certain number of steady tipplers—whether farmers or city folk. Cold and unrelenting facts reveal that about the same number of Kansans die of cirrhosis of the liver, year in and year out, whether there is an Eighteenth Amendment or not.

What is the situation in Canada, where the sale of alcoholic beverages is regulated by the government?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Again, figures from unbiased sources—such as hospital records and the official Bureau of Statistics at Ottawa —will tell their story. They offer unprejudiced means of comparing conditions with those in the United States.

All but one of the Canadian provinces have systems of government liquor control. Quebec has the most liberal and Ontario the most strict.

Quebec introduced government sale of alcoholic beverages ten years ago. The Liquor Commission established stores in various cities where alcoholic liquors are sold in sealed packages—one bottle at a time. Between nine in the morning and six at night these stores are open. Holidays and election days they are closed. Sales are made openly and freely. The alcohol has been passed on as pure by government analysis. Wines and beers are sold in licensed hotels, restaurants, clubs, trains and boats by permit holders. No store for the sale of alcoholic beverages may be opened in any town which votes against it.

In Quebec, figures on alcoholic diseases are available for only three years, 1926 through 1928. During that time the death rate from alcoholism has been very small—slightly higher than in Kansas, but less than in Indiana. However, three times as many people in every 100,000 died from alcoholism in New York state during the same period. Do people of the Empire State indulge in more frequent drinking bouts? Or is their bootleg liquor more poisonous than that sold under Quebec liquor control? Most of these deaths in Quebec were from chronic or acute alcoholism, with very few from delirium tremens.

Comparing admission rates for alcoholic diseases of the Royal Victoria Hospital, in Montreal, and Bellevue Hospital, in New York City, we find that the New York hospital has taken in much the greater number of victims in proportion to general admissions. And in the last eleven years alcoholic admissions to Bellevue have increased threefold.

You do not have to live long in Montreal to realize that there is less abuse of alcohol there than in New York City. In the summer months, during the American invasion of Canada, conditions are about the same in the two cities. In the more expensive hotels, you constantly meet "guests of Canada" bent on taking full advantage of their temporary opportunities. But when the snow is on the ground and the sleigh bells are jingling, and Montreal has ceased to be the Mecca of thirsty Americans, it is a temperate city.

I have studied closely the drinking habits of the people of Quebec city, and particularly of the outlying sections of the province where only French is spoken. These simple folk regard intoxication or excessive use of hard liquor as a disgrace. They drink light wine in moderation and with their meals. There is far less abuse of liquor there than in most sections of the United States today.

During three years of government liquor control in Quebec, there has been a rise in the number of deaths from hardening of the liver. In two years, in spite of the fact that there were nearly 90,000 less people in the province, these cirrhosis deaths had increased from 125 to 168.

Nevertheless, in proportion to the population, New York state under prohibition had nearly twice as many deaths from this cause as Quebec. In Kansas and Indiana this death rate was also heavier than in Quebec.

Ontario has a larger population than Quebec, and over half of its people live in the country. It has a much stricter system of liquor control. In this province, the only place in which liquor may be kept privately is the home or a room in a registered hotel. Nothing but wine can be bought without a permit. Containers of liquor must be taken home before they are opened. Public drinking is not allowed. Quebec, in contrast, permits the sale of beer by the glass in taverns. Both wine and beer are also served with meals in licensed hotels, restaurants, steamships and dining-cars. The sale of whisky and other spirituous liquors by Ontario government stores is restricted to one case at a time. By law a certain period of time must elapse between individual purchases. In Quebec, on the contrary, a customer may return and buy another bottle of spirits as often as he wishes. Beer may be bought almost anywhere in the Canadian provinces—from the grocery, the brewery or the government store.

How does Ontario, under recent strict liquor control, compare with New York, Kansas and Indiana, under national prohibition? A few more people, in proportion to the population, die of alcoholism in Ontario each year than in Kansas or Indiana. In the wet Empire State, the situation is reversed, for three times as many people in every 1,000 die of the effects of alcohol.

During the same period, for every three people who died in Quebec from cirrhosis of the liver, there were about seven people in Kansas, nine in Indiana and nine or ten in New York to whom the same disease was fatal.

The death rate due to alcoholism in the United States in 1929 was nearly six times that of 1920, the first year of national prohibition. It was highest in Maryland, Nebraska, Delaware, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, West Virginia, Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania and Kentucky.

The great increase in deaths from alcoholism evidently comes as a result of drunken orgies, from frequent "booze parties." Undoubtedly the greater amount of poison and impurities in bootleg liquor is also responsible for the large number of people who die of chronic or acute alcoholism or develop alcoholic insanity.

An admitted evil of prohibition is the change it has brought about in the drinking habits of the people, particularly in the younger generation. Since all alcoholic beverages must be obtained surreptitiously, it is natural that hard liquors should be sought; whereas, if they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were obtainable, many would be content with beer or light wines. But space is very important in all bootlegging plans, and whatever is sold must have plenty of "kick" in small compass.

Here is another fact that the figures show. In proportion to population, many more people in this country die from hardening of the liver and alcoholism than in Canada. Perhaps this is because more "hard liquors" are drunk here under prohibition than under the Canadian system of regulation. The prevailing motive seems to be that, if one is to break the law, he may as well do it with gin or whisky as with beer or wine.

The widespread consumption of poisoned liquor together with the increasing predilection for hard drinks, as contrasted with beer and light wines, is beginning to crowd the wards of our state hospitals for the insane. As noted above, census figures record an increase of 60 percent in admissions to state hospitals from 1922 to 1927. This is in accord with the experience of practising physicians, who have found that home-made moonshine and hooch concocted from denatured alcohol are vastly more poisonous in their effects on the brain

In Canada, the per capita consumption of spirituous liquors like whisky and gin is only a little over one-third of what it was fifteen years ago. Official records show that the people drink more beer and wine, which, with their lower percentage of alcohol, are harmless if taken in moderation.

All the facts prove that, however successful officials have been in diminishing the supply of unadulterated liquor, millions are still drinking poisoned or moonshine hooch sold under the name of whisky or gin. Hospital admissions, insanity and deaths due to abuse of alcohol are increasing with gigantic strides. Prohibition has merely changed the source of supply from the licensed distillery to the uncontrolled bootleggery.

America is wet, far wetter than the Province of Quebec, where liquor is sold openly under government supervision.

The Pheasant

A pheasant cock sprang into view,
A living jewel, up he flew.

His wings laid hold on empty space,
Scorn bulged his eyeballs out with grace.

He was a hymn from tail to beak
With not a tender note or meek.

Then the gun let out its thunder,
The bird descended struck with wonder.

He ran a little, then, amazed,
Settled with his head upraised.

The fierceness flowed out of his eyes
And left them meek and large and wise.

Gentleness relaxed his head,
He lay in jeweled feathers, dead.

ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN.

EPHESUS

By JOSEPH M. EGAN

THE CHURCH is celebrating the fifteenth centenary of the Council of Ephesus. In the November days of 431, though the smoke of battle had hardly cleared and no man knew how great or how small a defection from the Church would ensue, the victory was an accomplished fact. Of that victory the most eloquent witness is the ceaseless invocation on the lips of millions, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us." For it was the use of this title of Our Lady that precipitated the fight won at Ephesus.

The long agony of Arianism and its denial of the Divinity of Christ had ended. But the fifth century had the aftermath of Arianism. Defending the Divinity of Christ and stressing the need of a Divine Redeemer to undo the fall of man, a great champion of the Faith, Apollinaris of Laodicea, had made a new Christology, the Christ of which was indeed Divine but something short of human. True God He was, but not true man. The excesses of this line of defense were checked by authority but, going beyond the opposite limits of orthodoxy, critics of Apollinaris saved the real human nature of Christ but gave Him a human person. Christ was a human person in Whom dwelt the Divine Son of God. There were thus two persons in the Incarnation.

Had this doctrine remained the learned error of the pundits of the School of Antioch, it might have died a quiet death. But on November 22, 428, a sermon in Constantinople put the issue before the Catholic laity in a way that raised a storm. Anastasius, chaplain of Nestorius, the new Archbishop of Constantinople—both of the newcomers from Antioch—preached against the title, "Mother of God." Mary, he taught, is the mother of the human person, Christ, but not of the other Divine Person. To crush the protests which Catholic piety put forth in favor of the time-honored title of Our Lady, Nestorius himself took the field. On Christmas Day the capital of the Roman Empire saw its archbishop begin a course of sermons against the Catholic doctrine. Remonstrances availed nothing. On the feast of the Annunciation when Nestorius was refuted in his own cathedral by the sermon of another bishop, he waited only for the applause to die down, rose, and answered the preacher. And from Constantinople the news and the controversy spread. The ranking prelate of the East, the Patriarch of Alexandria, Saint Cyril, put himself at the head of the Catholic defense. Finally Rome condemned Nestorius and appointed Saint Cyril to carry out the sentence. The matter was to be handled without further ado. The sentence, with a letter of the Pope, Celestine, was delivered to Nestorius on Sunday morning, December 7, 430, after Mass. But unfortunately, during the interval the idea of a general council to deal with the question had been taken up by the emperor, Theodosius II, and already he had issued a summons to the arch-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bishops to meet in Ephesus at Pentecost, 431, and to bring some of the bishops of their provinces with them.

Now came the marshaling of the episcopal hosts. Saint Cyril came with fifty bishops of Egypt, Juvenal of Jerusalem with the delegation from Palestine, forty suffragans of Memnon of Ephesus, Nestorius with ten. Count Candidian represented the emperor. Day by day the numbers grew. But the great Patriarch of Antioch, John, with his bishops had not come, and the legates of the Pope, who had acquiesced in the emperor's plan, were still on the way. When Pentecost came—it was June 7 that year—the bishops fretted but postponed the opening of the council. It was hot, living was dear, and when a message came from John of Antioch suggesting that the council proceed without him, Cyril and the majority took him at his word. The council opened June 22. Saint Cyril, in the double capacity of Patriarch of Alexandria and holder of the mandate of the Pope, presided. At the very first session Nestorius was condemned, deposed, excommunicated. And Ephesus where, says tradition, Our Lady lived after leaving Jerusalem, went wild with joy.

The sequel is sad. John of Antioch and his bishops arrived on June 26. They were joined by some of the Nestorian party. And still in his traveling clothes—so angry was he—John held a rival council of forty-three bishops, which deposed Saint Cyril and the Bishop of Ephesus and all who adhered to them. On July 10 the three legates of the Pope reached Ephesus. At the second session, held that day, they delivered a message of the Pope to the council. On July 11 at the third session they ratified the sentence against Nestorius. At the fourth and fifth sessions the case of John of Antioch was considered and he and his party were condemned. Two more sessions completed the business of the council by July 31.

Strong in numbers (they were about two hundred to some three dozen of John's faction), strong in the support of the Roman Pontiff, the council lacked one very necessary support, that of the government. The reports sent to the emperor by his representative were highly colored in favor of the Nestorian party. And Theodosius had announced he would send a special envoy to Ephesus whom the bishops were to await. In August he arrived, Count John. The message he brought from the emperor must have made the bishops wonder if Theodosius knew any facts about Ephesus at all. He addressed his decisions, among others, to the Pope and to the Bishop of Thessalonica, who were not there, and to Saint Augustine, who had died over in Africa eleven months previous. The decision was an approval of the condemnation of Saint Cyril and Nestorius, both of whom were arrested. And the report sent back by Count John was as misleading as the earlier ones of Candidian. John's only sensible action was to provide separate exits from his quarters for the bishops of the two parties. The Catholic bishops were hard pressed. Cut off for a time from direct communication with the emperor, threatened even with a food blockade to break their spirits, their only hope lay in the Catholics of Constantinople. A hollow stick in the hands of a beggar carried their appeal to the capital.

It reached the Abbot Dalmantius, who was a man of great repute in Constantinople. He had abandoned the military service for the cloister forty-eight years previously and during those years he had not gone out of his monastery. At times the emperor paid him a visit. But on this occasion Dalmatius broke his rule of life. Heading a procession of all the monks of Constantinople and acclaimed by the Catholic crowds of the city, he went to the palace, asked and received audience, and left with a promise of justice for the Council of Ephesus. Additional appeals and continued pressure from Dalmatius and the allies of Saint Cyril in Constantinople finally induced the emperor to receive eight representatives of the council and eight of the Nestorian faction. Two of the papal legates headed the Catholic spokesmen. Theodosius met them at Chalcedon, opposite Constantinople. He accepted the sentence of the council and had the Catholic delegates consecrate a new bishop for Constantinople in place of Nestorius. Finally the council had won. The bishops disbanded.

The sequel is long. History tells how Nestorius went to exile in Egypt and wrote a book in defense of himself. John of Antioch and his bishops were reconciled to the Church. The unyielding adherents of Nestorianism were driven out of the Roman Empire into Persia and turned the Persian Church from Catholicism. The Nestorian Church of Persia ran a marvelous course for centuries, planted the Cross in distant China, and then dwindled, until today it counts only its thousands in Iraq, Persia and India.

But the Church of Celestine and of Cyril, who was high-handed but stanch in orthodoxy, moved on with doctrine unchanged, as she must ever move. "One Celestine, one faith," the bishops of Ephesus had cried—the faith of One Person and two natures. And the rosary slips through the hands of the Church's children of all ages to the words, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us."

Out

My cistern is but very small,
A friend, an hour, the buckets fall
And rise and fall, so fast one lowers,
So wastefully the water pours.

We dip and drink. Your final word
Made such a splash I never heard
The dripping bucket clink, but dry
My cistern is and I must lie

And fill with scarlet tree and knit
A web of grey and leave my wit
To bubble slowly to the top—
Lucky to save a priming drop!

DOROTHY LEONARD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A CENTURY OF POE

By EDWARD J. BREEN

EDGAR ALLEN POE'S literary product is closer related to the literature of 1931 than it was to that of 1831, the year he published his first pretentious volume of verse. He was not quite twenty-two years old when this work amazed and rather frightened its readers of a century ago. The weird and fantastic imaginings of the young Baltimorean were unlike any former school of poetic expression. His technique still remains a mysterious issue to some of the self-sure versifiers of this generation, while cultured critics find references to his literary mechanisms furnish piquant flavorings to their stint. Recently Frederic F. Van de Water, in his review of "The American Black Chamber," questioned the wisdom of "cherishing the impression that Poe was a cipher expert."

Between the isolated, tragic Poe and the conservative, orderly writers who in 1831 were ruling the literary purlieus in the United States and Great Britain, there was no possibility of sympathy or understanding. Poetry was then at a very low ebb. Charles and Alfred Tennyson were pursuing their poetic way with the complacent tranquillity of that period. The startling originality of aim and spirit in the Poe lyrics, presented about the same month as the fraternal Tennyson book, revealed the author's work as "a new departure" in the evolution of modern literature. Of all the poems in the volume the one that presented Poe in the fullest light was the tenderly strung lyric, "To Helen," a complete self-revelation in verse. The sources of inspiration for all the work of the author seem to have been from within and not to have been dominated by the work of any other man. Some contemporary critics have striven to prove Poe's indebtedness to Keats and Coleridge by the assemblage of many thousands of words. They have proved nothing, however, beyond aiding us to envisage his verse in every essential feature as a mystic lay woven in the world of dreams. It possesses the rich quality of being at home everywhere and not needing interpretation anywhere.

The weird, the fantastic, the mysterious and the incomprehensible, which have such a large share in the literature of these days, seem to be the lineal descendants of Poe's "Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Purloined Letter." Apart from the evidence of the story of his life, his work in prose as well as verse conveys the tragic isolation in which he lived with reference to contemporaries in either sphere; but it is indeed significant that in the volleys of accusation which malice, envy and ignorant bigotry have hurled at the head of Poe, a sustained charge of plagiarism has never found place.

As was the case with Washington Irving, Nathaniel P. Willis and other contemporaries, European countries discovered and appreciated Poe long before his fellow countrymen thought him worth while. The translation of Baudelaire is evidence, while the marked influence of Poe in the development of the French school of symbolists is a result closer to our own time. The dearth of appreciation in his native land was gall and wormwood to the supersensitive Poe, whose successive comings and goings in the home of his adopted father and his later lapses in married life play no part in an estimate of his literary ability, especially as to his influence in the development of the popular literature of these days. We must recognize the prototypes of Sherlock Holmes and Craig Kennedy in "The Purloined Letter," "The Gold Bug," and "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." The French detective story traces direct descent from Poe, while it seems unquestioned that "William Wilson" and "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" are very close relatives. The versatility of his genius has shed its rays all over Europe. Denmark has felt its influence through "The Fall of the House of Usher," while Italy has warmed to and reveled in Poe's artistry.

One feels sure that "The Raven" was the inspiration for Rossetti's "The Blessed Damosel," a fantasy in mystic vein that reveals the subtlest graces of the Dantean period. While the poem is in its essential character an obverse presentation of the conditions that maintain in "The Raven," Rossetti explicitly avowed his indebtedness to Poe at the time of publication.

The buffetings of fortune did not wither the Poe quality of work nor interfere with its quantity. It was during his life in a miserable furnished room in Greenwich Village, New York, that "The Raven" was completed. His wife, her mother and the family cat occupied another room not very far away. He was at the time working as associate editor and contributor to the *Broadway Journal,* the *Mirror* and the *American Review.* The *Mirror* and the *Journal* published "The Raven," February 8, 1845. On the evening of that day Poe was discovered by some of his friends wandering about old St. John's graveyard, facing disaster and already destitute. He was a heavy user of tobacco, but on the present occasion he had none, nor had he the means to purchase any. He admitted he had been "having one of my times."

A true estimate of Poe's genius is in his wide influence felt even today. James Ryder Randall, author of "My Maryland," described Poe as the "greatest, even if the most tragic, literary figure of his time." His death at forty in 1849 ended his tragedy, but his influence lives, untainted and unspoiled, in the constructive annals of the world's literature.

THE LITTLE SINGERS

By VINCENT C. DONOVAN

ON SATURDAY, November 14, the Little Singers of Paris made their New York début at Carnegie Hall. This choir school group from Paris consists of twenty-five boys and thirteen older singers comprising Boy Scout Troops 20 and 21. The French committee of patrons, headed by the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris and Marshal Hubert Lyautey, bristles with distinguished names. The boys themselves come from a working-class community, attend public schools and are active Boy Scouts. So effective, and heroic, indeed, has their Scout work been, that their unit is the only one in France to have merited the Médaille de Sauvetage.

Their daily routine includes musical instruction under Abbé Maillet of the Schola Cantorum, which for many years has had such beneficent effect upon music in France. The chorus was founded in 1907. Though they have toured widely in concert, their real purpose has been to serve as a kind of itinerant choir school for Paris churches. Thoroughly disciplined in the art of song through daily work with their able director, they occasionally sing in churches in and about Paris, serving as models for parochial groups. Now, under the auspices of the French Chamber of Commerce, these liturgical minstrels have come not so much to rouse admiration for their art as emulation of their spirit.

That spirit was simply and delightfully manifested in their New York concert. The program in content and rendition made clear their animating purpose. The program was divided into two parts, the nature of each symbolized by the albs which the boys wore for the first half, and their green Scout uniforms for the second part. The first half consisted of Christmas carols, motets of the great polyphonic masters of the sixteenth

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

century, and a psalm of the same century by Manduit. During the intermission the choir, surrounded by a group of American Boy Scouts presenting the colors, sang both the French and American national anthems. It was interesting (and pleasant!) to hear "The Star Spangled Banner" in French. Part two consisted of madrigals and songs of the sixteenth century, two lovely Canadian folk-songs, and a group of French folk-songs. The division of the program was physical and graphic only. The simple, exquisite beauty of all the numbers sublimated and transfused the character of even the lightest and gayest of the compositions, giving a unity of spirit which is unique in program structure.

While the inherent nature of the compositions had something to do with this, the secret of it really was in the chaste, ethereal rendition of the whole program. All the numbers were sung *a capella*. One of the notable features of it was the fidelity to pitch throughout. The tone was lovely in texture, limpid, clear, unforced. With the exception of the Sistine Choir boys under Monsignor Rella, the writer has heard no boy choir with a massed tone so naturally and beautifully produced. The two or three times there was any asperity of tone, it was in the alto or tenor sections, though this was redeemed by the velvety tenor of a priest in the choir. The sopranos made clear the lovely melodic lines, and the other voices were what they should be—an artistic accompaniment. Flexibility of phrase, the sure mark of intelligence and artistry, was remarkable.

This was achieved through a truly artistic command of dynamics, not only as to phrase but as to composition. It was particularly evident in the Vittoria numbers which were the climax of the program. Never was there any blasting of tone. All was quiet but wonderfully effective. With a group twice or three times as large, volume would have been increased, but the dynamic principles would have been just as intelligently applied. The vocal effects were not on a large scale, but done in pastel shades. Dynamics were perfectly graduated to give a smooth, highly intelligent and truly beautiful interpretation. Herein also this group is unique and worthy of emulation, particularly by liturgical singers.

They seem to have caught the quiet, priestly spirit of their director. Abbé Maillet has no mannerisms. He has trained his singers well, and they respond with alacrity to his slightest indication of will. His singers are alive all the time. They sing with intelligence and apparent joy. But it is not in an exuberance of spirit, but by depth of understanding and intensity of feeling. Their song is artistic because it is from within. Hearing them makes one realize that music is the language of the soul, the most intangible yet the most powerful of the arts. The charm of their singing and its emotional stimulus on an audience come from their simple sincerity. Their song is not an exhibition but a prayer. Even the madrigals and folk-songs were prayer, inasmuch as they were interpreted with the intelligence and emotional depth, but with the economy, of one appealing to our rational rather than to our sensitive powers.

The Little Singers are indeed singers of the Wooden Cross! That cross is the symbol of art and of life. Art is based on the principle of selection, which means the sacrifice of all non-essentials. This refinement is the essence of culture as of sanctity. It is the loss of self for the enrichment of the spirit. The beauty of the compositions interpreted by the Little Singers was clearly revealed, not only because they are singing artists but particularly because their transparency of spirit was evident in their detached yet spirited rendition of a delightful and refreshing program. Theirs is the spirit of the liturgy—"Sursum Corda!"

COMMUNICATIONS

BLAME FOR CRIME

Dorchester, Mass.

TO the Editor: To see others as they see themselves, or better still, to see them as we see ourselves, might prove even more valuable a gift, especially to our historians and statesmen, than the gift Bobby Burns prayed for. Probably none of the three views would disclose all the facts with entire accuracy, but what a gain to our humility, to our charity, to our self-restraint might result! To adjudge, as we frequently do, some classes of foreigners as enemies or inferiors, whether in their home country or as immigrants among us, inflates our pride and kills our charity.

Whatever else may be said of the Wickersham Commission, it deserves the thanks of all just men for its latest report exonerating the foreign-born from responsibility for the crime wave. There is no element of our population entirely free of blame.

Furthermore, a fair study, objectively, of all the facts of our history would expose the subjective fallacy of the 100-percenters who charge that the immigrant is responsible for the vagaries, social, legal or political, which have somewhat altered the course of our ship of state. This racial-origins obsession is destructive of unity: it is loaded with division, dissension and disintegration.

We are in danger, as a democratic people, of worshiping the form while forgetting the norm of good government. This norm might be stated thus: A strong government, possessing a unitive purpose and commanding a willing obedience; such obedience as will uphold the arm of the law, in punishing the disorderly; such unitive purpose as will aim to promote the well-being of the governed. Oblivious of such a standard, we seem to rejoice because an established government has been upset, though tyranny or anarchy takes its place.

Granted that nations, no less than individuals, deserve punishment so that order in the world may be restored, we must not violate justice or charity to establish the democratic idea nor even to uphold Nordic ascendancy.

What the world lacks (and needs) is the universal outlook upon all humanity; an outlook which shall envisage as its goal the equality of all sovereignties, the charity of our common origin and destiny, and an ordered liberty proceeding from cheerful obedience to just laws.

CHRISTOPHER J. FITZGERALD.

PORTO RICO

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor: President Hoover, after a visit to Porto Rico, seems to conclude that the island's chief trouble is overpopulation.

The Catholic Association for International Peace, examining this problem, seems to conclude that a large part of Porto Rico's troubles may be attributed to the three most important sugar companies on the island: Guanica, Aguirre and Fajardo. The C. A. I. P.'s principal criticisms of them are: absentee ownership; violation or evasion of the land law by these three American corporations, resulting in an illegal or improper control of land to the exclusion of native Porto Ricans; exploitation of labor through plantation stores; paternalistic control of labor.

It so happens that about eighteen years ago this writer was invited to represent the Board of Directors of the Aguirre company on the island, and to live at Aguirre for direct and personal supervision of just these things. Perhaps his observations may still have value.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1. Without going into general discussion of "absentee ownership" as applied to stock companies, which would lead pretty far, it may be said specifically that absentee ownership is the reverse of the traditional policy of at least one of the companies under discussion, namely Aguirre. A sketch of its history may not be out of place.

A sugar mill and cane lands were bought by a small group of Americans just after the Spanish war. They incorporated and eventually placed the stock of the company on the market. For fifteen years one or the other of the founders lived continuously on the island at the plantation, with frequent visits by the others. It was in accord with the fixed policy of resident ownership that the writer was selected to be resident representative of the board as the corporation expanded. The founders were still owners.

2. In organizing Porto Rico as "an insular possession of the United States," a provision was incorporated for the protection of the native land owner against elmination by powerful American corporations engaged in agriculture. The object was served by prohibiting ownership by such corporations of land in excess of a fixed acreage. There was nothing violative or evasive of the law in leasing land from the native owners for cane cultivation, which was the common practice. Most certainly native owners were not exploited thereby, for prevailing land rentals were exorbitant.

Whether cane sugar can be produced or not by corporations on the acreage permitted by the law to be corporately owned is not in question here, though it is a question that should be given consideration in any serious report on Porto Rican conditions. The particular point here is violation or evasion of the law, which is a serious charge, and should be examined at first hand before going on record publicly about it.

3. At Aguirre we installed plantation stores, after careful deliberation, and the corporation's policy was to operate them at cost. The reason for that decision was the profiteering of privately owned village stores and the poor quality of the food and other commodities sold to our labor at high prices. Naturally, the private store owners complained bitterly, just as they did in Panama and the Canal Zone, when the United States government was forced by similar conditions to set up its own supply system for Canal employees and labor. We tried to operate our stores at cost. A curious result, however, was that we could not. Buying wholesale and selling retail in units generally showed a profit.

4. This policy of establishing plantation stores went hand in hand with building sanitary labor quarters and with control of those using them. Quite obviously we controlled our labor quarters. We required general sanitary observances not usually practised by island labor. We maintained a hospital and first-class physicians drawn from the Public Health Service of the United States. We endeavored to utilize the discoveries of Dr. Bailly Ashford and other pioneer scientists studying tropical diseases and their prevention and cure. We facilitated schools and helped churches.

It is notorious that endemic disease and malnutrition, extending apparently far back before the American acquisition of the island, have resulted in a low physique among native Porto Ricans of the agricultural labor class. Porto Rican labor was, nevertheless, better paid than more efficient labor in the neighboring islands.

It was the definite policy of all responsible planters to raise the condition of labor by sanitation, better food, better housing. It was part of management policy to make it possible for native women to bear living children and to raise them adequately.

If, in thirty years, that policy has resulted in overpopulation, it is good evidence that part of our program was successful; it is less evident that success in that line is a matter for public reproach. It must be proven first that it is a mistaken policy.

Of course we might have advocated the restrictive policy so dear today to a certain class of social welfare worker, but there were three things against it: At one time or another, the general managers of all three of these great plantations were Catholics who would not have held with this modern theory even if they had known anything about it; Americans at that time still held with Saint Paul (in their hypocritical Victorian way) that "there are some things which should not even be mentioned among you." It would have been quite impossible to raise such a subject at a gentlemen's directors' meeting. Our chief of police was a hard-riding Wyoming cow-puncher, with decided ideas about what is a "manly" vice and what isn't. If we had known about and practised some of of the things now publicly advocated, we would have been landed, inevitably, in the local *calabozo*.

As to the paternalistic control of labor, we had an undesirable labor situation, and in it was involved evolution to adequate citizenship.

In the opinion of this writer there was only one way to work out of that situation, that is, by control of such labor sufficient to guide it and raise its standards, physical and moral, by this "paternalistic government" which seems to be so shocking. That opinion was accepted by no less an expert than Mr. Samuel Gompers, when he came to Porto Rico to study native labor. This writer discussed the situation fully with him. The Union labor advocates in Porto Rico were agreed that Aguirre labor should not be unionized as long as our management continued on the same path.

It would be a pity to forget that social justice is a comprehensive term and is not achieved by dictatorship either of capital or of labor. Labor unions are a proper method of protection against exploitation of labor. We were satisfied that so prominent an advocate of unionized labor as Mr. Samuel Gompers did not consider protective measures necessary in our case.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

THE PENSION

Buffalo, N. Y.

TO the Editor: My attention has been called to the article in THE COMMONWEAL of October 14, 1931, on "The Pension" by Helene Mullins. Some of the statements as contained in this article are not authentic. As District Supervisor for the Western Division of Old Age Security, I am familiar with the provisions of the act and with its proper administration. To quote from Miss Mullins's article: "When you do one dishonest thing, you naturally arouse suspicion as regards your whole character, and the worthiness of your case. I can't say how disappointed I am in you, Mrs. Stevens. Of course, I know you really need the pension, but my personal opinion goes for nothing; it's the facts on my reports that are considered."

There is no place in the Old Age Security Law where worthiness is one of the requirements, so that the application could not have been denied solely for the reason as stated by Miss Mullins. The law states very definitely that one of the legal requirements is "need," and thereby would Mrs. Stevens qualify according to the facts in Miss Mullins's narrative. Neither would the condition that the old woman had $100 in the bank disqualify her, as aged applicants may retain $250 in cash.

If it were true that the Old Age Security allowance was denied under somewhat similar circumstances as those given by Miss Mullins, then there must have been additional informa-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion that was not given in the article. If the facts were as stated by Miss Mullins, then there has been a miscarriage of justice and reapplication could be made.

It is the intent of the State Department of Social Welfare and of Commissioner Richard W. Wallace that a kindly, humane administration of the law be uniform throughout the state. The instances as cited by Miss Mullins would defeat the purpose of the law.

I cannot believe that Miss Mullins knows much about the Old Age Security Act, as the misnomer "pension" is incorrect. It cannot be called a "pension," as a pension is a payment for services rendered. This relief, however, is frequently miscalled by those unfamiliar with its tenets.

Knowing the high standards of your paper, I feel convinced that you would not wish to endorse a misleading article. The Old Age Security is a very fine, outstanding measure in the advancement of social service work and it is most unfortunate to have a false conception of its administration given publicity.

May I request that you give this correction, space in your paper.

EDITH M. MACVEIGH, *District Supervisor, Division of Old Age Security, Department of Social Welfare.*

LAUDS

Cambridge, Mass.

TO the Editor: Three contributions have recently appeared in THE COMMONWEAL which are of the very highest interest and deserve to be praised, remembered and employed. One is an article by Margaret Willoughby Weston, entitled "The Quest of Immortality"; the second is a brief letter from a priest recounting the death-bed of a sensualist; the third is a sonnet called "Confidence," in your issue of November 11.

As it happens, however, I come not to bury THE COMMONWEAL in bouquets, nor even to praise it, since for personal reasons I have no particular love for your periodical. The only excuse for my brief communication is this. I should like to ask Mrs. Weston, or anyone else, be he priest, philosopher, doctor, ordinand or editor (for the grace of God is not wholly absent, I suppose, even from this last profession) the following question: What can the Christian faith, and specifically, the Catholic religion, do to break down and dissipate, not sin and scepticism (we all know it can do that), but mental disease, in plain words, madness? If I knew the answer to that, I should certainly become a practising Christian, very probably a practising Roman Catholic. I do not believe there is an answer, or rather I believe the answer is: nothing.

LEO DILLON.

GREED IS THE WITCH

Toledo, Ohio.

TO the Editor: Let's have more from Michael O'Shaughnessy, business man and editor. I never read anything better, not even by Father Ryan of the Catholic University, on the true remedy for the depression (see November 4 issue, page 9). If that article, with its broad grasp of fundamental common sense, could be preached verbatim in the 20,000 Catholic churches of America, perhaps his hope might be realized—a baker's dozen of leaders to fight avarice and save the world.

Is there not an error in the statement that "504,000 individuals had an *income* over $1,000,000" (bottom of page 9)? I think it should read "504 individuals."

REV. A. J. SAWKINS

MATINS

Wollaston, Mass.

TO the Editor: The recent clear call of our Holy Father to prayer, action and sacrifice should, it would seem, stimulate the work of the lay apostolate to the man in the street in America. When we consider that in England the various Catholic Evidence Guilds, each operating under its own ordinary, have a total of 600 trained and zealous lay speakers out in the highways and byways, it is very evident that we have a long way to go in this valuable direction. It may be of interest to readers of THE COMMONWEAL to know, however, that we have in Boston a small group of young men in training for this work (under the direction of Reverend Patrick Waters, of St. John's Seminary, Brighton), who meet weekly for their training in Catholic doctrine in the rooms of the State Council of the Knights of Columbus. These young men have done very well indeed as lay speakers on historic Boston Common this last summer, and they are looking forward to their further training under Father Waters this winter with very good spirit.

In a country like America the help of a zealous and trained laity is absolutely necessary to carry the Catholic message to the man in the street. There are many bishops who would welcome a group of sincere and zealous laymen were they to present themselves for such work and ask that a priest be assigned to supervise their training in Catholic doctrine. May such groups soon come forward, burning with holy faith and such motives as shall cause the hierarchy to say, "This thing is of God"! Such a movement could be of immense value in bringing countless souls within the Divine influence which the Catholic Church alone wields.

WILLIAM E. KERRISH.

USURY AS A NEW ISSUE

Providence, R. I.

TO the Editor: It is disappointing, not to say discouraging, that my communication on "true" interest should bring from Mr. Frank O'Hara the query, "Can it be that he hopes to abolish all interest taking by the device of issuing an unlimited quantity of money?" Of course, no such absurd theory was presented by me in THE COMMONWEAL of November 4.

The circulation of any amount of money, however great or small, does not touch the interest question. But when a great amount of money is not used in circulation but is held in the banks as a surplus, such surplus money, if it is to be of any potential value, must represent surplus goods available for use in building new instruments of production; and if such surplus money is to be of any real value, it must act as a means of transferring the surplus goods into new capital. And new capital must come into being in order to keep industry going, if there is to continue to be interest on capital. Without new capital the building mechanics generally must be idle; they then cannot buy the current product of the factories, and then the factories must go on short time.

But the present amount of capital, with the present rate of interest, brings about an unused surplus of products and money. New and additional capital, with the present rate of interest, would by so much increase the annual surplus that it would soon aggravate the unemployment problem. But a continual reduction in the rate of interest would prevent a surplus of goods and money, so that capital might continually increase in quantity and yet there could be no general unemployment.

M. P. CONNERY.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE PLAY

By RICHARD DANA SKINNER

Reunion in Vienna

ROBERT SHERWOOD has spoiled what might have been an interesting comedy about the dregs of old Austria by a very obvious and unimaginative ending.

The play concerns the gathering of a small group of the former Austrian nobility in Republican Austria to celebrate the birthday of the old kaiser, Franz Joseph. To give the whole affair the personal application so essential to a well-written play, Mr. Sherwood has allowed us to see the reunion of the once-great through the eyes of an Austrian psychiatrist and his glamorous wife, who, in the older days, was publicly linked with the Archduke Rudolph Maximilian of Hapsburg. Dr. Anton Krug is thoroughly familiar with his wife's former vagaries, and Elena herself has made no secret of the affair. She has, however, made a resolute effort to adapt herself to new conditions and circumstances and to erase from her memory and from her emotions all vestiges of her former existence. The assembling of the clans and their insistence that Elena join them because of her old associations with the great circle thus comes as a considerable shock. To make matters worse, there is some chance that Rudolph Maximilian himself will be among those present. Elena's husband, Dr. Krug, believing that the best way to cure an old memory is to face the reality of it, urges her to go to the reunion. He believes that after the new and tranquil life she has experienced, she will be thoroughly disillusionized after once more seeing the archduke.

It so happens, however, that the archduke and Elena are about the only two of the old coterie who have not changed sadly with the years. For this reason, Elena's meeting with the archduke becomes more of a struggle than she had anticipated, particularly as that large mass of pompous egotism is determined to resume his old relationship with her. He has been eking out his existence as a taxi-driver on the Riviera, but believes that before condemning himself again into exile, he has the right to taste once more his old affections.

At this point, it would have been possible for Mr. Sherwood to give his play an edge of deep satire and in a few broad strokes to have demolished the hollow romance hanging around the atmosphere of the old court. At frequent intervals, it seems as if this were the turn the play is about to take, but in the end, Elena, taking advantage of Dr. Krug's trust in his own mental analysis, yields completely to her old infatuation. The play ends with the departure of the archduke after he has accomplished his main purpose.

I do not know why it is that Mr. Sherwood frequently comes very close to writing plays of fine discrimination and constructive satire only to end up in a mire of cheap filth. For the first two acts, the character of Elena is well drawn and there is every reason to believe that, with her vast reserve of common sense, she will end up by preferring the scientific stodginess of her present existence to the empty glamor of the past. But Mr. Sherwood seems bent upon reducing his potentially fine characters to the average level of an A. H. Woods bedroom farce. Most assuredly he did this in "The Road to Rome," thereby depriving the character of Amytis of all the essential meaning she might have attained. Evidently he does not believe, at least for purposes of playwrighting and box-office appeal, in characters who understand and appreciate the simple fundamentals of life. He prefers to draw uneasy sophisticates who are not even redeemed by their superficial cleverness and insincerity. In view of the ending of his present play, I cannot see a single redeeming feature in it, so far as theme and plot are concerned, and under these circumstances, the distinctly brilliant performances of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne merely serve to give the play a glamor which it in no way deserves.

There is no question that these two artists still hold a position of towering supremacy on the American stage, both in comedy and tragedy. A volume of detailed discussion would not exhaust the variety and interest of what they can do with almost any parts assigned to them. But that, I take it, is neither the beginning nor the end of what the theatre is beginning to mean in American life. The American stage has become a huge battle-ground for the ideas of people on fundamental questions. More than ever, the stage merely mirrors that confusion in all important standards which characterizes our national life at the present time. The problem passes beyond the mere question of clean plays or dirty ones. It reaches through to the very essence of the idea back of the plays themselves—in other words, to what we call the theme of the play.

It cannot be repeated too often that it is the theme of a play, far more than its material or its superficial plot, that affects public opinion. In one sense, the theatre is only a reflection of opinion, but in quite another and an equally important sense it serves to solidify and expand the very opinions it reflects. In other words, through the public recognition which it affords to the views of leading writers, it spreads among the great masses of audiences a certain prestige for these views. Now the essential viewpoint of a play is expressed in its theme—that is, in the main question as it is put up to the chief character of the play and in the answer which that character gives. In "Reunion in Vienna," for example, the main question put up to Elena is whether she will or will not remain faithful to her husband, and her answer is that she will not. Inasmuch as she is made out to be a most interesting and sympathetic character in the play, the whole effect of its theme is obviously that fidelity is a quite unimportant matter where a beautiful and glamorous woman is concerned. It is perfectly ridiculous, in such cases, for the playwright to plead his own neutrality in the question and to say that he is simply providing a character study. The playwright has in his power a hundred different ways by which he can throw the emotional sympathy of the audience for or against the action of his main characters. In the present instance, by making Dr. Krug a self-satisfied and dust-dry scientist, by making Elena an attractive though spurious romanticist, and by making the archduke highly diverting for all his egotism, Mr. Sherwood has closed against himself all possible pleas of neutrality. In spite of its atmosphere of airy satire and quick-spoken comedy, the theme of his play is nothing more nor less than the condoning of adultery. (At the Martin Beck Theatre.)

Steel

SPEAKING of themes of modern plays, "Steel" by John Wexley, the author of that very impressive play, "The Last Mile," has taken on its shoulders the difficult task of trying to prove that the steel industry crushes humanity out of men. Mr. Wexley has set about his task, however, in about as clumsy and amateurish and ineffective a manner as could possibly be devised. He has tried to let us see the workings of one of the great steel-making corporations through the eyes of a family of workers in the rolling mills. The father dies from high blood pressure in the first act, the son turns into a neurotic radical and tries to organize and lead a strike, and the brother-in-law remains to the end one of the loyal workers from whom all human instincts have been driven out through the metallic pressure of his trade. The real trouble is that Mr. Wexley has not thought out his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

problem at any stage. At one moment, he seems to be tirading against capitalism at large, but by the next what he is really complaining about is the nature of the work itself. He objects to the everlasting whistle which calls the men back to the mills as if that were somehow a symbol of capitalistic methods, forgetting apparently that even in the Communistic paradise of Russia today, men are still working with quite as strict a discipline.

If Mr. Wexley is merely attacking the need of regular work in any of the world's great industries, he seems to have no other alternative than to recommend a general migration to tropical islands where food can be had from the trees. On the other hand, if he is attacking the idea of work for a large corporation as distinct from the idea of work for the Communistic state, he has quite failed to make out a case. The play is just one long succession of growls and groans against every aspect of life in one of the big steel towns. To cap it off, Mr. Wexley has made his hero something of a coward and a great deal of a cad, inasmuch as he seduces his brother-in-law's sister on the plea that he "needs some joy in life."

The Lady with a Lamp

IN THIS play, which had quite a successful run in London, Reginald Barkeley has attempted to do with the life and character of Florence Nightingale approximately what John Drinkwater did with Abraham Lincoln. The chief difficulty lies in the fact that Mr. Barkeley is less skilful as an artisan than Drinkwater, being more given to stilted and rhetorical phrases, and that the character of Florence Nightingale, being less familiar to the audience, is hardly strong enough to round out a play which is not a play at all but merely a succession of incidents.

Many of these incidents have real beauty and an intense humanity which should make them good dramatic fare if presented with greater technical skill. I recall a very beautiful play of the same general description by Walter Prichard Eaton and David Carb which caught with glowing sympathy many of the major incidents of the life of Queen Victoria. I mention this simply as proving that the unfamiliarity of American audiences with famous characters of British political history is not in itself a bar to the dramatic effectiveness of English historical episodes. But once more, Florence Nightingale, as a character, fails to have the binding effect of Queen Victoria, just as she fails to achieve the dramatic proportions of Lincoln. There are many evidences in the play that the author instinctively recognizes in his heroine certain traits of egotism which are far from sympathetic as a dramatic background. As a woman, she had that very familiar trait of identifying herself with the cause she was serving to an extent which made many of her acts seem unduly selfish and fanatical.

Miss Edith Evans, who has been brought to this country to play the part of Florence Nightingale, as she did in London, does very little to soften this sense of personal ego. She does not succeed in making the character spontaneously sympathetic. This, of course, may be due to the discipline of a real artist—which Miss Evans undoubtedly is—in hewing straight to the line of character. The theatre, however, is a place where sympathies must be engaged if a play is to hold sway over its audience. It takes but slight imagination, for example, to see Miss Katherine Cornell quite transforming the entire feeling of this play. In doing so, she would perhaps be less true to history than Miss Evans, but she would be more true to the inner spirit of the theatre which is less a place for historical criticism than for beguiling human emotions.

ALTMAN
Young Men's Clothing

If you wear sizes 35 to 40 —you will find here values that cannot be denied!

Overcoats

Fine, all-wool fleeces that insure long satisfactory wear—styled in the popular double-breasted, half-belted model with deep satin lining. Oxford or brown. **$29**

MEN'S OXFORDS
Tan or Black—Several Models
Very Unusual at **$7.75**

YOUNG MEN'S CLOTHING — SIXTH FLOOR

B. ALTMAN & CO.
FIFTH AVENUE at 34th STREET
"Choose Altman Clothing with Confidence"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS

Religious Experience

The Growth of the Idea of God, by Shailer Mathews. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

IN THIS volume the author seeks to establish a basis for his theory of the evolutionary growth of the idea of God by reducing religion to an instinctive reaction of man to his environment. "In its ultimate nature," he says, "the behavior represented by the word religion can be described as a phase of the life process which seeks by control or coöperation to get help from those elements of its cosmic environment upon which men feel themselves dependent by setting up social, that is, personal relations with them." That the form of help so desired was not spiritual or intellectual, but merely economic, is clear from another statement. "Its origin [i.e., the origin of religion] was not philosophy, but an attempt to get protection and help from that upon which men felt they were dependent in satisfying the concrete, physical needs of life." Such a theory implies not only a philosophy of religion but a philosophy of history, and no better criticism of such a philosophy can be conceived than that formulated by the author in another work, "The Spiritual Interpretation of History," where he says: "Economic self-interest and capitalistic manipulation of social forces are certainly not to be overlooked, but when a historian appeals to them to furnish an 'ultimate' interpretation of human achievement and finds in them the general tendency of history, he becomes a sort of scholastic Glendower, boasting that he can summon causes from the vasty deep. It is with no lack of admiration for the solid accomplishments of the representatives of this view of life that we renew the challenge: 'But, cousin, will they come?' "

It would be unjust to the author to accuse him of upholding the economic view of history. His theory of history and religion seems to rest on a belief in the validity of religious experience as modified by economic instinct and need. Nobody can deny the author's right to discard the metaphysical approach to such a thoroughly theological question as the growth of the idea of God, but having rejected this method of approach, there is lack of consistency in substituting an ethical for a metaphysical category and conducting the inquiry in the light of a fully formulated definition of religion. History is one of the vasty deeps from which not only theory, but facts to substantiate theory can readily be summoned, and when religion is viewed under the compass of such an all-embracing formula as adjustment to environment, history can be drawn on to offer support in favor of any theory of development. Nevertheless it is difficult to follow the chain of argument by which the conclusion is arrived at that "Christianity is the outcome of a very complicated social process." It is doubly difficult to imagine how blind, impersonal social forces could have given rise to that transformation in social ideas and processes which the same author some years ago found associated with the name of the Founder of Christianity and which he set forth so cogently and conclusively in the work, "The Social Teaching of Jesus." Then, speaking of Our Lord, he said: "No man's teaching has equaled His in the magnitude of its social results, and there may be messages in His words yet worth hearing." This statement would tend to show that there is a break in the orderly continuity of social evolution and theory which vitiates the entire basis on which the argument of this book rests.

A philosophy of history which does not accord with the facts of history is, to say the least, open to suspicion. Fact and reality should be paramount. The author's statements of fact are frequently confusing. He says: "The early Christians had a common meal in which they had believed the Christ was present." There is here apparently some confusion between the Agape and the Eucharist. If the Agape is meant, the reference to the Real Presence is out of place; if the Eucharist, its description as a common meal is inaccurate. Again: "It is not difficult to understand why the civil authorities of Rome could believe that the Christians actually partook of human flesh and practised orgiastic license." The civil authorities took no direct cognizance of these charges which were common enough in popular calumny. Both statements are in themselves insignificant except in so far as they are adduced to support the contention that the belief in the Real Presence was the result of a gradual growth.

The thought and theories of Professor Mathews derive their importance largely from the position he holds, and they are significant because he was at one time president of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. They represent in a high degree the subjectivism of the philosophy of the last century. The anthropocentric theories of that time are, however, passing out of vogue and the chapter in this book on "A Contemporary God" is even now out of date.

PATRICK J. HEALY.

Inside the Human Cosmos

Discovering Ourselves, by Edward A. Strecker and Kenneth E. Appel. New York: The Macmillan Company. $3.00.

THIS is a sane book on mental hygiene, simply and helpfully written. It will enable the reader to understand why his and the other fellow's mind has quirks and peculiarities. It discusses inferiority complexes, extroverts, introverts, repressions, nervousness, neurasthenia, with all the knowledge of modern psychiatry, but so simply that the man in the street can understand it and apply it.

The book has two main sections, the first giving a simple explanation of some of the main conceptions of modern psychology and psychiatry, and an introduction to its terminology with some definitions of the vocabulary. The second part takes up the mental conflicts of everyday life, and describes the devious ways the mind works in trying to evade them or meet them.

The first part of the book helps us to think psychologically about "our own troubles, worries, fears, distractions, irritabilities, sensitivities and peculiarities." It does excellent service in pointing out concretely the intimate relation of body and mind. It is not a behavioristic conception of mind, or other modern psychological vagary.

"What is the human mind?" the authors ask. "It is not the brain, since the brain is a material structure visible to the naked eye, and under the microscope it is further revealed in its finer details. The mind, on the other hand, is something non-material. It cannot be seen or touched or measured or weighed. It is something spiritual, if you will. Spiritual, however, does not mean the mind is not actual and real. Far from it! For instance, a man of spirit is very real. In our thoughts of him we emphasize this side of his make-up rather than his body. The spirit is the important and vital thing. It is truly the very essence. The spirit of a school, of a business organization, of a family, and even of a nation is the real and the essential. Yet it cannot be seen. What do we remember of a beloved one who has died? His body? No. We recall more clearly his 'spirit'; his tendencies and his enthusiasms;

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his likes and dislikes; his ideals and his conflicts; the things he struggled for and the things he fought against. When we think of the mind of another we think of his thoughts, feelings, and impulses, his ideals and his will. In short, we think not of his toes or fingers, or nose or heart or lungs, but of his personality, which is non-material and is the sum total of his behavior with reference to mental factors. Nevertheless, nerves, the spinal cord, and the brain, which are a part of the body, are necessary. Without them the mind cannot function."

After pointing out that action is the normal end and object of the functioning of the nervous system and of conscious experience, the authors point out the balancing function of wholesome normal activity in every-day life—and, when necessary, in a "well-organized spa or sanitarium." Teachers would be greatly helped by the chapter on "Action as the Goal of Mental Processes"; it gives a broader base than ordinary for our demand for activity in schools. The authors also give the relation of those phases of mental life that fade one into another, the conscious, subconscious and unconscious.

All this background of psychological concept and terminology is a preparation for the second part of the book. Psychoanalysis is simply defined as ways of finding out what actually happened in the mind. "Theories (sexual or otherwise) are not necessary for such analysis." A description is given of the difficulties we get into mentally, called complexes, a not unusual, in fact, quite an ordinary, human experience. The complex is an idea or group of ideas closely bound together by an emotional bond. Two facts are especially significant. The existence of complexes in great numbers in our minds on all levels of our mental life is the first fact. The second one is that they clash. If adjusted, we may enjoy mental health, happiness and progress; if not adjusted, the result is nervous disorder, unhappiness and failure.

The mind has many ways of facing these conflicts. It is extraordinarily ingenious in the ways it works. Its subterranean structures are marvels. Introspection and psychoanalysis here give us names for these activities of the mind in which we attempt to avoid conflicts or to protect our personality. They are described in the second part of the book.

The first way man reacts to a conflict is to react emotionally. He just blows off steam (regression). Another way we seek equilibrium is to rush into frantic and excessive activity (extroversion). Another way is to turn into oneself, and to try to find relief by excessive thinking (introversion). We become absorbed in aimless phantasy. Still another way we try to avoid mental conflict is by rationalization or mental camouflage. It is a process of self-justification which often merges in self-deception.

The mind in its process of avoiding conflicts or protecting the personality or in justifying itself uses many other methods. It may secure equilibrium temporarily, at least, by trying to keep the conflicting elements in logic tight compartments, or refusing to recognize the conflict (segregation). Or the mind may try to forget or repress the conflict (repression). Or it may attempt to separate the "ideas—emotions—tendencies into differerent groups that have no working agreement among themselves (dissociation). Or, the very familiar type, a person may attempt to translate his mental conflict into physical symptoms." "Neurasthenia, or so-called nervous exhaustion, is largely the fatigue resulting from mental cross-purposes. The cause is not actual fatigue and exhaustion of the nerves. It is fatigue and exhaustion as a result of excessive emotion."

There are other methods of avoiding mental conflicts and mental cross-purposes. By symbolism we may transfer, by

THE EDITORS OF

THE CATHOLIC BOOK CLUB

wonder if there is a more appropriate or more welcome Christmas gift than a year's subscription which assures the recipient of twelve outstanding, contemporary books. Surely the older graduates of our Colleges and Academies and the younger ones from our Universities must be pleased to discover that every month appears a book from a Catholic writer which equals and often surpasses the best that the non-Christian world of literature offers.

The December selection, **R. Dana Skinner's** timely and up-to-the-minute **"OUR CHANGING THEATRE,"** attractively bound and illustrated, will be sent in a gaily decorated Christmas box, with, of course, a gift card, so as to arrive at the favored door before December twenty-fifth, if you will just send us the order today.

Please enroll for one year's membership (12 books) and send first book and gift card in time for Christmas, to:

CATHOLIC BOOK CLUB, INC.
441 Lexington Avenue, New York, N. Y.

☐ For $25 enclosed enter my subscription for one year (12 books).

☐ For $4 enter my subscription. I promise to pay $4 a month for six more months for a total of 12 books.

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State .....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEXT WEEK

THE COCKPIT OF ASIA, by Adam Day, is a survey of the present situation in China which relates it to historical premises and its larger implications. It is seen to involve not only the imperialist ambitions of Japan, but also the security of persons and property in a bandit-infested region, the literal interpretation of treaties, and the order and precedent of treaty obligations when these conflict, the emergence of China as a unified and responsible nation, and the prestige, and very life, of the League of Nations. All of these elements of the situation are generally familiar, but it is most helpful to have them interrelated and to be able to see them in some proportion. . . . PRINCE VON BÜLOW, by Catherine Radziwill, spicily reviews the memoirs of the former German Kaiser's Chancellor and special emissary to Italy when that country wavered between casting its lots in war with the Allied or the Entente powers. The reflections which Von Bülow cast on German motives and diplomacy and intrigue, are matters of common information, and the present reviewer from a wealth of personal contacts and experience, points out the peculiarly warped character of the Munchausen-like chancellor. . . . ARE THE POPES IN ERROR? by Roy J. Deferrari, recounts the story of the efforts of succeeding Popes and of the hierarchy in the United States to establish a Catholic University in America which shall be second to no other university, and the value to Catholics and to scholars in general of this aim. . . . OUR LEADING MANUFACTURE, by Burton Kline, investigates the facts of the release of human energy which has been brought about by the improvement and wider use of machinery. The leading manufacture resulting from this is seen to be unemployment—a steady and seemingly relentless increase in unemployment. The factualness of this survey shows very clearly the need for social adjustment.

means of the mechanism of the condition reflex, our difficulty to an association that has no causal relation to it, but which saves us from facing the issue. Beside this method of substitutes, we may attribute our faults to others or to the nature of things (projection) or we may claim as our own, qualities that belong to others (identification).

The difficulty in all these methods of meeting mental conflicts is the danger that while giving a temporary escape, they create permanent problems. We become involved in our own mental processes. Difficulties are multiplied, problems become more complex. We are victims of our own mental processes. And one remedy is to use the process of sublimation. This is described in a very broad sense as a "diversion of energy from an unobtainable desire into new pathways leading to constructive and satisfying attainment."

EDWARD A. FITZPATRICK.

In Russia

The Volga Falls to the Caspian Sea, by Boris Pilnyak; translated by Charles Malamuth. New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation. $2.50.

BORIS PILNYAK has been hailed as the leader in the development of the modern Russian novel. At the same time his American publisher has announced that his writings are not sufficiently orthodox to escape official charges of being unpatriotic and counter-revolutionary—charges which so far have not been drastically pressed.

Considered as a piece of literature and not polemics, "The Volga Falls to the Caspian Sea" is an attempt to capture in prose the mood of the symphony, which has its many moments of success. The stress through repetition of many minor passages is lifted from monotony by their application to the individualistic perceptions of the characters themselves. Again certain overtones are given a strength and clarity by the same method. Yet Mr. Pilnyak's style, if the translation is a faithful one, is inclined to the obtrusive and excessively verbose, a tendency which is characteristic of and frequently considered admirable in the Russian writer.

In development of theme there is more experiment. Pilnyak creates a teeming world which is poised on the brink of catastrophe. His detailed development of the past lives of his characters thus precedes the dénouement and is accompanied by a suspense which has all the characteristics of a *tour de force*—one which the patient reader will nevertheless find amply justified in the power of its treatment. Pilnyak's skill as a writer is most evident in his portrayal of the chaotic emotions of a driven, yet reconciled, people. Here he has painted masterly a picture instinct with life, realistically subjective despite its objective execution, and completed with finesse and élan.

Under the Five-Year Plan a gigantic engineering project is nearing completion. By it the Moscow River will reverse its course and flow, not to the Volga, but past the capital and thence by a system of canals to the River Don and the Black Sea. Tens of thousands of workmen are employed in this geographical upset, and Mr. Pilnyak concerns himself with those who are engaged in erecting the key dam. What he achieves in characterization is sufficient evidence of his talent. For he has brilliantly portrayed reactions to a new milieu in which his men and women are bravely or resignedly or antagonistically striving to adjust themselves as individuals to a wholly new concept of the world—a world in which the norms of liberty, ethics and morality have been destroyed and none set up in their place. Mr. Pilnyak, perhaps to the rage of his gov-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ernment, does not gather up their lives into a Soviet millenium. He is too much the artist to conclude. The very uncertainty of Russian life today, the question of ultimate goals and the doubtful advantage of winning to them, bring to naught the elaborate scheme of sabotage, and the completion of the Five-Year Plan is left to work good or evil. What will emerge for the individual must be left to the future.

JOHN GILLAND BRUNINI.

Scandinavia's Rousseau

August, by Knut Hamsun. New York: Coward-McCann, Incorporated. $2.50.

TONS of paper have been impressed on the subject of the duties and the art of reviewing; some of which has passed through my hands, but at the end of it all I cannot get over the impression that in reading, and therefore in what the conscientious reader reports, what is one man's meat is another man's poison. For instance, Hamsun is to me invariably a banquet, whereas to some estimable persons I know, he is a fare from which they claim they get no profit nor pleasure. Having thus declared my partiality, I feel that I can go ahead and neither curb nor disguise it. "August," for a matter of fact, is God's plenty in a novel for $2.50; it is nearly four hundred and fifty pages long. That will be prime news to a real lover of Hamsun; such a one will envisage the hours he has in prospect of transport into a bucolic community where no one is disturbed by the novelist, where the people are not made to fly around like chickens and go through eccentric motions, and produce a plot as though their very lives depended on it. Everyone is completely relaxed and natural. There are no marvelous effects, except that all life, and even inanimate things, are infinitely marvelous, a child, or a leaf, or even a moss-covered stone by the door, and the hopes and dreads that simple people turn over silently in their minds.

"August" carries on the story begun in "Vagabonds," published last year. It is a study in a microcosm of the principal ills that affect the world today. It shows the advent into a peaceful and self-sufficient community, of the fever of commercial enterprise, of speculation, of a regular "boom" during which everyone drops the production of substantial goods in order to lend each other money and to do various fanciful things that in the end only bring on starvation and misery. No wonder that Hamsun is the most translated living author in the world; his themes are of such simple and universal experience—that is, except for his few eccentric novels such as "Hunger," "Pan" and "Shallow Soil," which deal with the very special problem of the idiosyncracies of a potential genius and the toll the workaday world takes of him. In "Growth of the Soil," as an instance of his dealing with a universal theme, he introduced into the primaeval forest a lone man who builds himself gradually a shelter, subdues the soil for food, marries and raises a family, peopling the wilderness. "Vagabonds" and "August" have an equally simple and yet, in its implications, universal theme, the spread in a community of what is called modern civilization.

There is much that is coarse in the book, so it is not to be recommended to the delicate reader. It is complete of all things in life, except genuine faith. This no doubt is a great loss, yet should faith have moved the people, as Kipling would say, "Well, that's another story!" It is strictly earthy, a tale of poor, material creatures, whose desires are worldly, who as a matter of fact, want pitifully little, but who are forever unappeased. August is that anomaly, a lovable rogue.

FREDERIC THOMPSON.

"Takes the reader in close company with La Salle and his comrades to his great victory and heart-wringing defeat. It is a thrilling tale, well told."
Book of the Month Club News

La Salle

by Leo V. Jacks

author of "Xenophon: Soldier of Fortune"

"From his boyhood in the ancient French city of Rouen to his tragic death in the fever-ridden swamps of this country, the author builds up, chapter by chapter, a moving, vivid picture of the man".—*Chicago Tribune.*

282 pages, $3.00 *at all bookstores*

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS NEW YORK

Our Changing Theatre

By R. DANA SKINNER

Dramatic Editor of The Commonweal

$3.00

The plays, playwrights and actors of the last few years, are here intimately discussed. This book also contains important chapters on acting and production, on the changes in motion pictures and on the profession of play criticism itself. "Our Changing Theatre" not only forms a distinctly novel contribution to the study and understanding of the modern theatre but reflects the current temper of the Amrican mind and its ideas and ideals.

"No juster analysis of the outstanding plays of the past few seasons on the stages of Manhattan has been made anywhere . . . Mr. Skinner has earned the gratitude of every reader. . . ."—Otis Skinner.

LINCOLN MACVEAGH—THE DIAL PRESS, INC.
152 West 13th Street, New York

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SAVE-A-LIFE FARM
Nyack, N. Y.

ECONOMY SHOP
77-79 West 170th Street, New York
Corner Boscobel Avenue

Proceeds devoted to supplying pure milk and fresh vegetables to undernourished and delicate children from the crowded districts of New York.
A telephone message to WEstchester 7-5725 will bring a truck to your door for anything and everything you do not want.
Parcel post packages solicited.

Sisters of Our Lady of Christian Doctrine
1427 Doris Street, Westchester, N. Y.

The Commonweal Solves Your Christmas Problems

Send THE COMMONWEAL for one year to:

NAME .....
STREET .....
CITY .....

NAME .....
STREET .....
CITY .....

NAME .....
STREET .....
CITY .....

DONOR
NAME .....
STREET .....
CITY .....

☐ Payment attached. ☐ Bill me January 1st.
☐ Send gift card to me. ☐ Send gift card to recipient.

In ordering two or more subscriptions you can take advantage of our special rate of four dollars each. Single subscriptions are five dollars.. Add fifty cents for Canadian and one dollar for foreign postage to each subscription.

The Old Romantic Formula

Susan Spray, by Sheila Kaye-Smith. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

TO THE large audiences of Sheila Kaye-Smith enthusiasts I can report that "Susan Spray" is a study of the evangelical passion in a woman, a mystico-proselyting flame that rages on the same altar with the heroine's abiding sexuality. The type is constant in life and literature, and it is about time that it was made the subject of a trenchant, penetrating study. Mr. Sinclair Lewis started out to give us a full-length portrait of the type in "Sharon Falconer," but realizing very early that the material was so wantonly attractive as to defeat interest in his main character, he hurled the lady evangelist to a sudden death.

Sheila Kaye-Smith, working well within her soft-blown Sussex tradition, has deftly sentimentalized Susan Spray and made an easily palatable job of her. There is no probing beneath the surface of her contradictory and potentially fascinating character, no analysis of her case in the light of what we know about its psychology. "Susan Spray" is one of those well-written, nicely-rounded, but-what-of-it novels produced by gifted but highly romantic authors on both sides of the Atlantic. These authors are either unwilling or unable to cast off the saccharin spell that charms them (and thousands of their readers), with the result that the honest blood-and-salt of life cannot be found within their pages.

It is this facile sweetening of "Susan Spray" that will not satisfy those demanding something more than the perpetuation of a literary legend; the vein of this legend is exhausted and nothing new can come of it. My conviction about "Susan Spray" is that such novels are essentially derivative and fabricated, partaking too largely of traditional subject-matter, character-type and situation, found all through the nineteenth century. To come briefly to the point: Sheila Kaye-Smith is an offshoot of the great school of George Eliot and Thomas Hardy. With marked eclectic talent she selects such of their material as she needs, and can handle, to weave a story. To say that she is satisfied to plow the worn-out romantic glebe instead of breaking new ground, is, when laid against a writer of this ability, the most serious charge that can be made.

HENRY MORTON ROBINSON.

Spring Hill

Catholic Culture in Alabama (Centenary Story of Spring Hill College, 1830-1930), by Michael Kenny, S.J. New York: The America Press.

IF THE Cabots who speak to the Lowells are names in the Harvard clientele, and the Hadleys with the Dwights at Yale, there are names equally distinctive, historically and socially, in the tradition of Spring Hill College: Bienville and Portier in the early records, and Semmes and Sands in the settled culture of the mid-nineteenth century. Around the names and the heroic careers of Bienville and Portier, what material for historical romances await the zealous research and stylistic skill of such writers as Willa Cather and Agnes Repplier!

Bienville was the younger brother of the famous Sieur d'Iberville, who was the greatest of seven illustrious sons of the Canadian, Le Moyne. Iberville planted his French insignia at Mobile Bay in 1699; when yellow fever cut short this pioneer's further plans, the governorship went to the young brother, Bienville, at the age of eighteen. The Memorial Cross in Mobile square holds the valorous memory of his deeds in the foundation of the religious and civic culture of Mobile.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A century later the outstanding name in that historic background is Michael Portier. He was born in the Lyons diocese, France, in 1795, ordained in St. Louis by Bishop Dubourg in 1818, appointed the first Bishop of Mobile in 1829, and founded Spring Hill College in 1830. The interims between these dates are replete with heroic enterprises and saintly endeavors and achievements. Having but two priests with him when appointed to the vicariate as Bishop of Oleno in 1825, a diocese that could contain three-fifths of France, his letter to the Vicar General in Lyons is the true tone of the giants that were in our missionary and educational world in those days: "All I need is the grace of Jesus Christ; with His power I am all powerful. A horse, my little portable chapel, the Gospel, a bit of bread—that's all I need in the woods; the consolations cannot fail me. God has favored me with apostolic health; He will preserve it for His glory and the help of souls." Straightway he went on a campaign to France for religious subjects and for funds, and returning with his candidates and with financial contributions from the Propagation of the Faith and Propaganda, which, as Father Kenny notes, "severally contributed more than John Harvard and Elihu Yale had bestowed upon their foundations," Bishop Portier reached Mobile on the feast of the Epiphany, 1830. Thence begins the noble history of Spring Hill College and of its vivid and vital influence in the culture of Alabama, not merely among Catholics but largely among-non-Catholics, not only in English accents but in the language and literature of the descendants of the early Spanish and French settlers.

The subsequent history is decidedly fascinating and the story is most engagingly told by Father Kenny. The regret is that in a brief review one may not rehearse some of the captivating stories out of fact and legend connected with the college and its society. The volume is a splendid contribution to Americana.

MICHAEL EARLS.

Two Lectures

The Creation of Character in Literature, by John Galsworthy. New York: Oxford University Press. $1.00.

On Translation, by Hilaire Belloc. New York: Oxford University Press. $1.00.

UNDER the tutelage of Romanes and Taylor respectively, two estimable British authors regaled Oxford with secrets of the trade during 1931. Mr. Galsworthy, following Dilthey in a measure, argues that the creation of character is the result of special ability to "dip into the storehouse and fish up the odds and ends of experience" and then to weld "those odds and ends when they are fished up." Character is considered from the relatively different points of view of the biographer, the playwright and the novelist. Whether one nods assent to all of the contentions, there is no doubting Mr. Galsworthy's skill in putting the heart of modern literary theorizing into terse and beautiful language. This lecture is a slight thing—merely twenty-seven pages—but it is indispensable.

Mr. Belloc is an excellent translator. Indeed one would not be completely bewildered if it were said that his versions of French poetry and prose are the most distinguished of his works as an artist. Perhaps, in a sense, he is quite aware of his gifts. At any rate he told Oxford a great deal about translating, giving very specific rules and making admirable recommendations. It seems to me that much of what he says is especially applicable to the rendering of French into English, but his general principles and most of his conclusions are impregnable. There are only forty-four pages, but many fat books have less meat.

PAUL CROWLEY.

Willa Cather's

SHADOWS ON THE ROCK

THE BOOK OF THE YEAR

The American people have bought over 150,000 copies of *Shadows on the Rock,* their tribute to one of the great novels of our time which Alexander Woollcott has called ". . . a sure, tranquil, evocation of a day gone by." $2.50

When doing your Christmas shopping do not forget *In My End Is My Beginning* ($3.75) by Maurice Baring which was the November choice of *The Catholic Book Club.*

Write for the New Borzoi winter catalogue

ALFRED · A · KNOPF

At all bookshops

BORZOI BOOKS

"*The Flame* is an important book for young people, colorfully done, and furnishes many unexpected lessons for the present day."—*Indianapolis Public Library.*

The Flame:

St. Catherine of Siena

By JEANETTE EATON

Catholic Book Club News Letter:
"Miss Eaton's biography has a style eloquent yet simple, her approach spontaneously sympathetic yet not unduly eulogistic. Nor does she patronize her youthful reader—indeed the adult will find her work highly absorbing, for she has been painstaking in her authentication of those events which she describes. These are presented with a wealth of detail which captures the color and romance of the early Renaissance, and against this background, the Mantellate emerges a living and brilliant figure of heroic virtue and imperishable faith."

Catholic Library World:
"Jeanette Eaton has given us another alluring book in *The Flame.* St. Catherine is one of the most picturesque women in Mediaeval history. The story is vividly told. The interest never flags; indeed it could not, for her influence asserted itself in the many ramifications of Church and State during that bloody period."

Illustrated.....$2.50

Miss Eaton is also the author of:

A DAUGHTER OF THE SEINE, $2.50

JEANNE D'ARC, $1.25

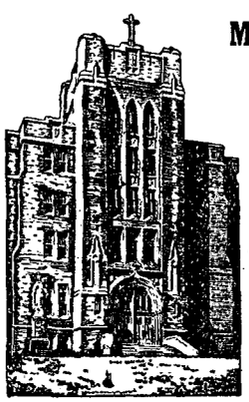
HARPER & BROTHERS....*Publishers*....New York

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

National Catholic **CONVERTS LEAGUE** 563 Fifth Av. New York City
Free Reference and Circulating Library
Reading Room, All Enquirers Welcome
10 A.M. to 7 P.M. except Saturday and Sunday
Booklet descriptive of the Plans and Purposes of the League will be mailed without cost upon request.

St. Hilda Guild, Inc.
CHURCH VESTMENTS, ALTAR LINEN
Ecclesiastical Embroidery
Conferences with reference to the adornment of churches
Old Embroidery Transferred
131 EAST 47th STREET NEW YORK
EL dorado 5-1058

The DOMINICAN COLLEGE
of San Rafael
(Incorporated 1891)
A COLLEGE FOR WOMEN
Resident and Non-Resident Students Conducted by Sisters of St. Dominic. The Dominican College is on the List of Colleges Approved by Association of American Universities.
A Member of the American Association of University Women
In the SCHOOL OF MUSIC, special certificates are granted, and the degree of BACHELOR OF MUSIC is conferred.
For full particulars address The Secretary, DOMINICAN COLLEGE, San Rafael, California.
PREPARATORY DEPARTMENT, DOMINICAN HIGH SCHOOL
San Rafael, California


MT. ST. MARY-ON-THE-HUDSON
NEWBURGH, N. Y.
The school that emphasizes character and health in a truly Catholic atmosphere.
Definite preparation for a career in college, business, art, music. Scholastic standards accredited by the University of the State of New York.
Modern fireproof buildings. Sixty-five-acre campus. High altitude.
New gymnasium; athletic field.
Illustrated booklet upon request.
Sisters of St. Dominic

BURR PRINTING HOUSE
FOUNDED 1837
FRANKFORT AND JACOB STREETS
NEW YORK, N. Y.
CATALOGUES, MAGAZINES, BOOKS
AND COMMERCIAL PRINTING

Briefer Mention

The Flame: St. Catherine of Siena, by Jeanette Eaton. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

HAPPILY Miss Eaton, in writing for the high-school age, has carefully avoided talking down to her readers. In consequence, this biography of one of the Church's greatest saints can be thoroughly enjoyed by both adults and children. Miss Eaton herself has obviously come under the influence of her subject, for no more glowing eulogy of Saint Catherine could come from a Catholic. Naturally there is no attempt to present completely mystical and intellectual analyses, but the Mantellate, almost from her introduction, becomes a living figure moving against the beautifully described panorama of Siena, Florence, Pisa, Avignon and Rome. Historically the picture is not detailed, but sufficient of the French domination of the Papacy and the dissension of Guelphs and Ghibellines is sketched to facilitate a quick comprehension of the essential political features of the period. Dramatically the book takes full advantage of excellent opportunities. Yet Miss Eaton has sensibly refrained from overemphasis and, sincere and spontaneous as is her enthusiasm, she has never allowed her treatment to embroider truth with the sentimental or the excessively laudatory.

The Inquisition, by A. Hyatt Verrill. New York: D. Appleton and Company. $3.00.

MR. VERRILL is the author of many books in a popular vein on topics of a historical character and on such attractive themes as "The American Indian," "The Real Story of the Pirate," "The Real Story of the Whaler," "Secret Treasure," and "Great Conquerors of South and Central America." The history of the Inquisition is dealt with in considerable detail and with due regard for all the gruesomeness the subject has to reveal. The author disclaims any intention of giving offense and in his introduction goes so far as to assert that, considering the inhuman punishments enjoined by some of the contemporary legal codes, it is surprising that heretics were not treated with greater cruelty than they were by the Inquisition. The work contains nothing new. It is apparently a mere summary of the more striking and lurid pages found in the writings of Lea and some of the better-known authors who have dealt with the Inquisition. There are many illustrations and an extensive, though rather unconventional, bibliography.

CONTRIBUTORS

Rev. James A. Magner of Chicago recently returned from a trip to Mexico.

Francis X. Connolly is pursuing postgraduate studies at Fordham University and teaching in the English department.

Frederic Damrau is a New York physician.

Robert P. Tristram Coffin, professor of English at Wells College, is poet and essayist. His latest books are "Golden Falcon" and "Portrait of an American."

Rev. Joseph M. Egan is professor of church history at St. Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers, N. Y.

Dorothy Leonard contributes poetry to current magazines.

Edward J. Breen is a former Boston newspaper man.

Rev. Vincent C. Donovan, O.P., is an authoritative exponent of Gregorian music.

Rev. Patrick J. Healy is dean of the faculty of theology in the Catholic University of America. He is the author of "The Valerian Persecution" and "Historical Christianity and the Social Question."

Edward A. Fitzpatrick is dean of the Graduate School of Marquette University and president of Mount Mary College and the author of several books.

John Gilland Brunini is on The Commonweal staff of reviewers.

Henry Morton Robinson is the author of "Stout Cortez" and other books, and contributes to national periodicals.

Rev. Michael Earls, S.J., is a member of the faculty in the English department at Holy Cross College, Worcester, Mass.

Paul Crowley is a translator and writer of literary comment.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED